Labour Monthly

EDITED BY R. PALME DUTT

WILL IT BE WAR?

by

J. R. CAMPBELL

other articles and reviews by

R. PAGE ARNOT J. B. S. HALDANE

ALLEN HUTT

AUGUST 1939 SIXPENCE

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LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

VOLUME 21 AUGUST 1939 NUMBER 8

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CONTENTS

Page

Will it be War? 451
By J. R. CAMPBELL

Twenty Five Years Since 1914 463
By R. PAGE ARNOT

Colonies and Fascism 465

Anglo-Nazi Economic Co-operation 476
By JOHN AUSTIN

Dilution and the Unions 483
By JOHN FOWLER

Air Raid Precautions 488
By S. C. SAUNDERS

The Heritage of the French Revolution 494
By WALTER CRAMER

Controversy 504
A Reply to Emile Burns
By JOHN KNIGHT

Book Reviews 507
Marxism and Science by J. B. S. HALDANE
Democracy by ALLEN HUTT
Soviet Statistics by JOHN KNIGHT

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We regret that, owing to pressure on our space, we have been obliged to hold over the second part of "The New Situation in China" by Mao Tse-Tung, of which the first part appeared in July. This will be published next month and the concluding section in the October number.

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Will it be War?

BY J. R. CAMPBELL

[*Owing to other work, which is occupying his entire time for the present, the Editor is unable to write the usual Notes of the Month in this issue. The following article is, therefore, taking their place this month*].

" WILL WAR COME this autumn ? " That question is being asked and answered daily in the press in every country in the world. The facts are not in dispute. Nazi Germany and Italy, whose territory is threatened by no one, are moving great armies into position. Will those armies receive the order which will plunge the whole world into war ?

From the strategical point of view the situation has a superficial resemblance to that of last autumn when Germany was mobilising against Czechoslovakia, but the resemblance is only superficial. For last autumn the immediate objective of the Nazis was clearly defined. Until the military power of Czechoslovakia lying on the flank of Germany was eliminated, until the Czech-French pact was torn up, no other large scale adventure was possible. That is why Hitler, with the assistance of Chamberlain and Daladier moved to the elimination of Czechoslovakia.

This year the Nazi choice is wider. Will the main blow be delivered against Poland and will the Anglo-French guarantees hold? Or would it be better, while directing attention to Danzig, to prepare to direct the main blow at Roumania through Hungary ? These are the questions which the Fascist aggressors are considering.

It has begun to be popular to say in Britain that " it all depends on the will of one man, Hitler," as to whether there will be war or not. This is completely untrue in more senses than one. The Nazi war-machine is fully mobilised, the pressure of the capitalist forces in Germany, which are clamouring for expansion, are greater than ever before, and given no change in the external forces, given no complete and rapid strengthening of the peace barricade against

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aggression, Hitler will march. His will can only be affected by the most resolute and united attitude on the part of the forces in the non-aggressive states, who are prepared to bar the way to further aggression. And it depends not on one man, but on many men—in the first place on the organised Labour movement in the non-aggressive countries as to whether a Peace Bloc, capable of influencing the actions of the Führer, can be speedily built up. It is necessary to insist with all possible force that Hitler, as representing the German monopoly capitalists, is not a doubtful factor in the existing situation at all. Given the failure to build a Peace Bloc without loopholes, it is mathematically certain that his armies will march and that further countries will be annexed. The doubtful factor is the Governments of France and Britain. Are they for a Peace Pact or are they for a new Munich ? It is the unclarity in their attitude which makes it difficult to argue the question as to whether there will be peace or war. The final decision will be arrived at not in Berlin, but in Paris and London. Let there be the slightest hesitation in these capitals and war will come.

It is, therefore, the duty of the British Labour Movement to stop speculating about what Hitler will do and start to ensure, by the mobilisation of the British people, what the British Government will do, for the enemies of peace are still in our own country.

That is the lesson of the crisis over Danzig. The Nazis were testing their enemies and potential enemies in order to estimate their strength and solidarity. They have no reason to be displeased with the test.

They started with a press campaign of extraordinary violence directed against Great Britain, at the very moment that the other axis partner—Japan—was foully mishandling British subjects in Tientsin. " See," they seemed to say to the Poles, " that is what we think of your so-called powerful ally. We spit upon them at the moment that our Japanese allies are brutally ill-treating them. And they are unable to do anything about it." The barrage of propaganda was accompanied by action. A so-called " free-corps " was set up in Danzig. Tens of thousands of S.S. men entered the Free

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City in the guise of tourists. Trenches were dug and fortifications re-commenced and guns and tanks began to be landed.

Nevertheless they hesitated to proclaim the adhesion of Danzig to Germany, for the Poles showed a will to act quickly and determinedly—and were only restrained by the British Government. Even the latter worthies began, under pressure of public opinion, to make a show of making a stand. Chamberlain warned Germany that any attempt to change the status of Danzig, if resisted by Poland, would bring Britain in on Poland's side. So far so good. But the strong stand was vitiated by the declaration that Chamberlain would like to see negotiations on this question resumed between Germany and Poland. Here the path forward for the Nazis was indicated. Let them put their demands to Poland and the British Government would " advise " the Poles to negotiate. That is the way forward to new conquests for the Nazis. The old way—the way of September, 1938—is no longer possible for the people are more vigilant.

A significant feature of the Danzig crisis was the re-emergence of the Fifth Column forces in Great Britain. Writing with a knowledge of what was going on behind the scenes the *Daily Telegraph* said :

> Voices may be raised in Germany, perhaps even in Britain, to proclaim that our pledges of action will never be fulfilled if Herr Hitler can only be ingenious enough to find a way to disguise aggression as something else. Danzig, it is supposed, will voluntarily " come home to the Reich " on ground of " self-determination " and not be seized in the name of " Lebensraum " and surely—so the argument runs—the fate of Danzig would not rouse Britain to war.

As if to give point to the danger to which the *Telegraph* was drawing attention, Dean Inge wrote an article in the Church of England newspaper which said :

> He (Hitler) cannot be allowed to have everything his own way, but are we going to fight about Danzig, a thoroughly German town which ought never to have been separated from the Reich ?

Sir Arnold Wilson wrote a letter to the *Times* declaring :

> Herr Hitler stated on April 28 that he had proposed to Poland that Danzig should be incorporated within the Reich as a Free State (Staat). The phrase implies, he continued, existence of

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> the Free Port in Danzig harbour (such as exists in Hamburg and Trieste): it also implies the absence of guns and fortifications on this sector of the Polish frontier. . . .
>
> The question of Danzig can be settled only between Germany and Poland in direct negotiation which recent facts have made more difficult.

No demonstration of the Fifth Column would be complete without a pacifist contingent, and so we find the Glasgow *Forward* demanding "Should we fight over Danzig?"

Can these people really be so naïve as they pretend to be? Last autumn the same people were shrieking "Why fight to prevent the Sudetens returning to Germany?" When it was suggested that Nazi Germany was pursuing a wider aim than the incorporation of Sudetenland, that it was struggling for the destruction of Czechoslovakia, as a step on the way to reducing Europe to a German colony, the reactionary conservatives and their pacifist hangers-on pooh-poohed the idea. Yet Czechoslovakia has been destroyed. Now the same people are pursuing a line which, if carried out, would mean the destruction of Poland and a further increase in Nazi strength which would facilitate a war for the destruction of Britain.

The Fifth Column sortie was obviously aimed at testing the position and their campaign was conducted cautiously. Nevertheless their activity is a warning to those who believe that the betrayals of last autumn will not be repeated.

Indeed the attitude of the British Government to the Anglo-Soviet Pact is an indication that a further betrayal of peace cannot be excluded.

The impudent attempts to blame the Soviet Government for the delay are meant to deceive those who have not closely followed the development of negotiations. The reactionaries are trying to represent the situation as though the French and British Governments had approached the Soviet Government with the suggestion for a pact without loopholes, and the Soviets were displaying an inexplicable reluctance to sign. The facts are otherwise. Right from the commencement the Soviet Union has demanded a pact without loopholes while the British and French Governments were suggesting a system of guarantees that were positively full of loopholes.

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Step by step the British and French Governments have been dragged nearer to the position of the Soviet Government, but outstanding questions remain, of which the most outstanding is the attitude towards the Baltic states. The British and French Governments now pretend to agree that if Latvia, Esthonia or Finland are attacked by Germany, it would be the duty of the French, British and Soviet Governments to resist this aggression.

But suppose Germany decided to attack them by helping a reactionary movement from within—in the same way as it helped General Franco. The Soviet Government, it appears, is arguing that this is aggression even if there is no actual invasion and the Governments associated with the Peace Bloc must intervene to prevent it being successful.

Take the position in Finland where a Coalition Government of the Labour Party and Peasants secured 143 seats out of 200 in the recent General Election. In Finland there is a Fascist movement—the Lappo Movement—under German influence, about which the *Yorkshire Post* wrote :

> In November last year the Minister of the Interior Kekkonen, having collected ample proof that the I.K.L. was a mere alias of the dissolved Lappo movement, and that it was moreover subsidised from Berlin, banned the organisation and suspended its eighteen newspapers. The courts, however, subsequently cancelled these decisions despite the fact that Parliament had ratified them by an overwhelming majority. But now the electorate who has had the last say in the matter, confirmed, in substance, the Government's decree by voting the I.K.L. down.
>
> On the other hand this rout of the Nazi's most zealous henchmen in Finland coincided dramatically with the visit to Helsingfors of the German Chief of the General Staff, General Halder, who stayed in Finland from June 29 to July 3.
>
> Naturally this strangely timed trip of the German Army Chief to one of the world's most sensitive nerve spots at the present moment—considering the rôle Finland has played at the Moscow talks—has officially been labelled a " courtesy visit." But one cannot help wondering why General Halder, then, needed to inspect military establishments and aviation grounds especially in Northern and Eastern Finland. Or why the toasts and telegrams exchanged on this occasion should have stressed the intimate and cordial relations between the German and Finnish armed forces so much more than those existing between their nation as such. . . .

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> What makes all the Finnish happenings so problematical is the wide discrepancy still existing between popular feeling and the executive powers. The influence which the I.K.L. and Unionist party still wield in all branches of the Administration—Civil Service, Army, Navy, Police, and in particular among the so-called "Protective Guards"—is quite incommensurate with the actual strength of these parties in Parliament. Hence the almost permanent latent danger of a coup which would thwart the progressive evolution of public sentiment towards Scandinavia and the democratic Great Powers and throw the country back into the arms of Herr Hitler. (Special Correspondent in *Yorkshire Post*, July 11).

Now suppose the Lappo Movement and the Unionist Party succeed in pulling off a coup with the backing of Germany and proceed to turn Finland into a base for an attack on the Soviet Union, that is quite obviously aggression. Indeed one can almost say that it is the likeliest form that Nazi aggression is likely to take in nine cases out of ten. Yet the Old Men of Munich pretend that a pact of mutual assistance can be built without taking such contingencies into account.

Is it not clear that the British Government is deliberately resisting the signing of a peace pact without loopholes because it still hopes to arrive at an agreement with Germany?

That is what made the appeal of the National Council of Labour to the German People so dangerous. It is not wrong to appeal to the German people. But such an appeal can best be made if the Labour Party was engaging in actions against the Chamberlain Government and the friends of Hitler in Great Britain. But in point of fact the appeal presented the activity of the Chamberlain Government in a most favourable light, as if this Government were firmly engaged in building up the Peace Front. It should be noted that this manifesto was issued a few days after certain members of the National Council of Labour had had a long interview with the Prime Minister. Now this can be one of the most dangerous forms of class co-operation. It is well known that this practice of informing the official opposition of what is taking place is one which pre-dated the emergence of the Labour Party as the second strongest party. There can be no doubt, however, that this practice of letting the Labour Party in on the ground floor is one of the most effective means of "nobbling" it

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at decisive moments. A feeling grows up that the Government which has been so good as to explain its policy to the Labour leaders should not be too sharply criticised by those leaders. Indeed the opposite frequently results. The impression which the Government has made on the Labour leaders is transmitted to the Parliamentary Party, the Trade Union leaders and the active people in the rank and file. This is one of the most insidious forms of class co-operation because it takes in, in addition to those who favour class co-operation, people who formally object to it. It took the Labour leaders in during the September days in 1938, and it took them in again at the beginning of last month.

Incidentally it disclosed the real content of the Southport conference. If words were to be judged apart from deeds the Southport conference appeared to be a move to a more drastic struggle against the Government and the capitalist system. " It is a serious thing," cried Mr. Herbert Morrison opposing the Popular Front, " to abandon even for the time being our desire to transform the economic system which alone in the long run will really remove the fundamental causes of Fascism and War." Here is the bold and untrue assertion that the Popular Front meant that Socialists were abandoning their desire to change the economic system and that Mr. Morrison will have none of this chicken-heartedness. Yet the first positive act of the Labour Party is to issue a manifesto to the German people in which it declares that the issues of peace and war are in the hands of Hitler and of the German people and that the British Labour Movement and, by implication, the British Government need do nothing further about it. Thus the bold talk is replaced by a servile act of class co-operation.

Some of the speakers at Southport pooh-poohed the necessity of the Labour Movement winning allies in the struggle against Chamberlain and asserted the possibility of an overwhelming victory at the next General Election. Alas, these fine words are belied by actions. There is no campaign to rouse the British people to defeat Chamberlain, the Labour Party Executive will not meet during the months of July and August and leading members of the Party are

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expressing their anxiety at the prospects of the next General Election. " If Chamberlain risks a General Election while the international tension continues it will be a piece of political trickery " says Mr. Emmanuel Shinwell, dealing with the rumour that the Government will stage an election on October 25. " I do not believe that even Chamberlain would be brazen enough to have an election while the tension continues." Thus the loud shouts of impending victory with which the air of Southport was filled have dwindled to a thin whimper of demoralisation.

The prevailing demoralisation which followed the rejection of the Popular Front at Southport rendered the Labour Party helpless when a considerable section of the Tories, followed by the Liberals, raised the question of the reconstruction of the Chamberlain Government.

The case against this Government is overwhelming. As the recently published manifesto of the Communist Party said :

> The Nazi threat to Britain is so evident that it can be no longer denied. Yet the men still directing the country's foreign policy—Chamberlain, Simon, Halifax and Hoare—are precisely those who have helped to build up this menace; who lied to the British people about Hitler's intentions, who encouraged him to conquer Spain and Czechoslovakia, who for years sneered at and misrepresented the policy of the Peace Front which they are now pretending to accept.
>
> The organisation of defence is in the hands of a Government which has turned the defence programme into an orgy of corruption, profiteering and mismanagement, which has refused any adequate protection of the civilian population, and which continues to protect the vested interests which are looting the public purse.

Even honest Tories are alarmed at the manifest unfitness of this Government to pursue a policy directed to stopping aggression and to preventing the armament profiteers from waxing fat. And so the suggestion of a reconstruction of the Government admitting Churchill or Churchill and Eden is put forward by influential Tory circles.

Here is one of the central questions of British politics—that of the kind of Government that is necessary in the present circumstances. And Labour can give no answer. The South-

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port decisions forbid it to advocate a broad Labour and Democratic Alliance to replace Chamberlain, and it has not an iota of confidence that a General Election would give it any substantial increase in parliamentary strength. And so it remains dumb and helpless.

On the other hand Labour's natural allies, the Liberals and progressive democrats generally, seeing that Labour is not prepared to lead, tend to occupy themselves with projects for a reconstructed National Government—projects which cannot, if realised, give the country the Government that it needs.

Indeed there are dangers of some of the democratic supporters of a reconstructed Government committing serious blunders. We have shown in our propaganda that the capitalist oligarchy in Germany, which has succeeded in crushing the Labour movement and the capitalist oligarchy in Britain which would like to do so, are class brothers, that at every step the British oligarchy has assisted the German and that the British people could only be effectively defended by a government from which the representatives of the oligarchy were excluded. We therefore advocated a government of Labour allied with other democratic forces, a government which while it might contain Labour, Liberals and even Progressive Conservatives, would leave Labour the key positions, and would be a Labour led government. But it is possible to conceive of a reconstructed National Government, in which the key positions remain in the hands of the pro-Fascist oligarchy but into which one or two Labour men are brought to occupy subordinate positions and to give the government of the oligarchy a broad, national camouflage. It would be fatal to believe that this is the type of government that we want. Yet there is a tendency of Liberals and Progressive democrats to fall into this mistake. It is natural for them to do so, for if Labour does not try to draw them into its orbit, they will assuredly be drawn into the orbit of reaction.

Nothing can be more lamentable than to see the refusal of Labour to fight for these allies justified with reference to Socialism and even Marxism. Unlike some of the curious Marxists who have distorted their strategy, Marx and Engels

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never saw the class struggle as being a struggle of the Labour Movement against the rest of Society regarded as one solid reactionary mass. The Marxist conception was that of the working class versus the capitalist class, the working class struggle implying an effort to win allies from other sections of the population, so that the capitalist class could be isolated and defeated.

In all the recent discussions on the Popular Front this caricature of Marxism conducted a sham fight against a caricature of the Popular Front to the utter confusion of the issue.

For example, starting from the correct standpoint that an immediate transition to Socialism was not on the order of the day supporters of the Popular Front talked about "abandoning Socialism for the time being" and "putting Socialism in cold storage" and we had the simply grotesque spectacle of the most dyed in the wool Right Wing Trade Union leaders posing as men who were fighting with all their might to keep Socialism out of cold storage.

This presentation of the object of a Popular Front was a grievous blunder. Never at any time, in peace or in war, in a revolutionary or in a non-revolutionary situation, do we put Socialism in cold storage. On the contrary at every stage of the struggle we are guided by our Socialist principals and our Socialist analysis of the situation. The People's Front is necessary because it stops the advance of reaction and keeps the way open for Socialist advance. On the other hand it is precisely the refusal of the Right Wing leaders to form a broad alliance of Labour and Democratic forces which allowed Chamberlain to assist Fascism in the conquest of Spain and Czechoslovakia. It is precisely this policy that is putting Socialism in cold storage.

Another source of weakness in the campaign was that too much attention was devoted to the machinery of the Popular Front and not enough to its programme. Elaborate arguments were conducted as to whether the alliance would win ten, twenty or forty more seats than the Labour Party could win on its own. If more stress had been laid on the programme the mass of the Labour movement would have seen what

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the Popular Front was aiming to do, how it involved not a mere concentration of existing Labour and Democratic forces, but the winning of many people, who are now wavering, fully to the side of those forces. It would have been seen that it was a question not merely of appealing to Liberal and Conservative leaders, but of appealing also to the People who stand behind them.

And not sufficient was made of such inconsistencies as that of Mr. Morrison, arguing that a Labour and Progressive Government would necessarily be a weak Government, at the very moment that he was praising the unity and firmness of policy of the progressive Government of President Roosevelt.

Is the Popular Front dead as the Right Wing would like to believe? By no means. A few weeks after the Southport Conference there took place the Annual General Meeting of the National Union of Railwaymen, whose General Secretary, Mr. John Marchbank, was one of the hardest campaigners against the Popular Front. In 1938 only 18 out of the 80 delegates who attend this conference voted for the Popular Front. In 1939, 26 out of 80—almost one-third of the conference—voted for this motion. The Popular Front policy lives.

For the experience since Southport is a vindication of the Popular Front policy. The helplessness of the Labour Party, in face of the big struggle that is taking place in the ranks of the ruling class, is the best proof that Southport rejected the only realistic policy. It is further clear that the Labour leadership is going forward not to Socialism, but to the most servile co-operation with monopoly capitalism. At the Southport conference Mr. Arthur Greenwood declared:

> Right up to the Election the Parliamentary Party will uphold the flag. We will keep up the dignity of the party and we will prove that we are fit to govern. It is for you in the interval to give us the means to govern after the next General Election. . . . My friends, the fight is on. Soldiers, to your places.

"The fight is on." And here is Mr. Greenwood's conception of how it should be waged. At an all-parties dinner given in the honour of Sir Walter Kirke, Inspector General of the Home Forces, in the House of Commons on July 14, 1939,

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Mr. Greenwood said :

> I am satisfied in my own mind that if the worst should come to the worst . . . . the people of this country are confident in spirit and will trust whatever administration may be conducting a great war and their services will be a 100 per cent. at their disposal.

Here is a naked plea for national unity under Chamberlain—the Man of Munich. A plea which the Labour Party members should repudiate. For dangerous as the Chamberlain Government is in time of peace it would be doubly dangerous in time of war.

There are two paths along which the people of this country can advance. In spite of the so-called international tension the British people are showing a firm determination to force concessions from the ruling class. Great Tenants Movements, and a powerful Old Age Pensions Movement are sweeping the country and now in some of the key industries the workers are once more demanding increased wages. These movements can be developed to the utmost so that concessions are extracted from the Government and the Employers, and at the same time the people in these movements are convinced that the full realisation of their demands requires the sweeping away of the Chamberlain Government.

Still more important is the fight to preserve peace. The lie that " it all depends on one man—Hitler " has got to be exploded. It depends on the British people most of all. In their hands rests the question of whether the Anglo-Soviet pact will be signed and peace prepared, or a new Munich perpetrated. The struggle for a new government which will build the Peace Bloc, which will democratise the fighting forces, which will pursue a policy of social advance is still the central task of the British people, whose destiny is in its own hands.

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Twenty Five Years since 1914

Notes in Brief

BY R. PAGE ARNOT

A QUARTER OF a century has passed since the outbreak in August, 1914, of the first imperialist world war which destroyed forty-one million lives of soldiers and civilians and left the destinies of the younger generation in five-sixths of the globe to be handled by the keepers of the slaughter-house. These—Capital's blind forces personified—knew no better than to drive for the second killing; and the new imperialist war, now in its second year, already involves a quarter of mankind. This is the tale of these 25 years.

Unless those blindly working forces are known and understood and brought under control, there is no escape from the slaughter-house. In one-sixth of the globe these forces have been mastered, the laws of the economic development of society have been understood and acted upon, with a result that is to be seen not only in the growth and well-being and power of the Socialist Republics but in the most effective struggle for the preservation of peace throughout the world.

Only in the light of Marxism, therefore, can humanity find its way forward. All other explanations of these twenty-five years only make darkness visible. Impotent to clarify events and give guidance, they serve only to bewilder their dupes and make them easy prey to the forces of reaction.

Apart from the sophistries invented by the *Times* and other capitalist organs to justify the empirical policies of the ruling groups of Imperialism, and the echoes of this in the *Daily Herald*, the explanations proffered fall largely under the two heads of open bourgeois pacifism or of pseudo-Marxism. The former makes no pretence about it. It is opposed to Marxism and to class-struggle. The *Encyclopedia of Pacifism*, edited by Aldous Huxley, makes this clear. By feigned denunciations of the ruling class (which at critical moments, *e.g.*, Munich, quickly give place to adulation of Chamberlain) it gathers a following, very largely of lower middle-class elements, who are drawn insensibly into the camp of opposition to the Soviet Union and into support of Hitler-Fascism. Ostensibly opposed to all wars, in practice they bring aid to the war-mongers. They advise their followers to study Tolstoyan writings, but shrink from the logic of Tolstoy which led him to see that violence is rooted in private property.

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Pseudo-Marxism, on the other hand, seemingly opposes bourgeois pacifism (with whose organisations it is linked up) by its use of phrases about " class-struggle," " capitalist wars," etc. But in practice it serves to decoy into the net of bourgeois pacifism those members of the working-class who would be repelled by the open anti-revolutionary slogans of the pacifists.

One of its favourite methods is to utilise the comparison of 1914 with the present day, so as to confound the distinction between the one and the other. " It is 1914 over again " they say, thereby denying the whole movement of history and ignoring the factors which make the difference. Thus, viewing the present only as a mirror of the past, they are in reality seeing only what has happened (like the brave generals who saw in 1914 only an opportunity of practising on a wider scale the tactics and arms which they had learned in the Boer War) and are wilfully blind both to what is new in the present situation as well as to the real social processes.

The first imperialist world war was of such magnitude as to cause " a curvature of time " in the minds of men. The years are grouped around it and the decades immediately before and after are seen as the sowing and the aftermath of that grisly harvest. Now, as the new imperialist carnage spreads, it seems the rhythm of *pre-war*, *war* and *post-war* is established by the husbandry of fate; and all the features of the past in repetition are expected, dreaded and imagined.

The social processes are not so simple as this; and there are deeper realities to be comprehended. There is no eternal recurrence, nor is capitalism a long-lasting society. Against the " dark backward and abysm of time " capitalism appears as a brief and transient epoch: briefer still, against the bright future of mankind. The war of 1914 heralded the beginning of the end of capitalism.

The stage of monopoly capitalism, of the transformation into Imperialism, had been reached with the 20th century. The division of the earth amongst the big Imperialist powers was completed and the struggle for re-division took the form of imperialist wars. The development of capitalism, become ever more uneven, makes impossible any stable combination of the imperialist powers. The struggle between them led to the first imperialist world war. That war of 1914 was the sign that the *General Crisis* of capitalism had begun. Since then we have been living in the epoch of general crisis, an epoch of wars and revolutions, of the death-throes of capitalism. This is the significance of these 25 years since 1914.

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Colonies and Fascism*

THE STRUGGLE OF the colonial peoples for freedom is faced to-day with new and urgent problems owing to the advancing offensive of fascism.

These problems are also acute for the whole Labour and peace movement and for the world struggle for democracy.

Fascism, which seeks to enslave all the peoples of the world, directs its offensive, not only against free European peoples, but also and especially against the colonial peoples.

The colonial peoples, who are already oppressed under imperialism and struggling for their freedom, find themselves faced with a new attack from the side of fascism, which seeks to take advantage of their struggle with imperialism in order to find grounds for its own penetration, disrupt the national movements and thus prepare the way for its own domination. At the same time fascism seeks to drive a wedge between the democratic peoples and the colonial peoples by holding out proposals to the democratic peoples to surrender colonies to fascism as a supposed price of " appeasement."

A common policy of all the colonial peoples, and of the labour, democratic and peace movement in the imperialist countries is urgently necessary to defeat this new offensive.

The Colonial Aims of Fascism

The colonial demands of fascism have hitherto been mainly discussed in terms of the proposal for the return of the former colonies or corresponding colonial territory to Germany. Proposals along these lines have been put forward by the pro-fascist elements in Imperialism, as for example by the *Times*, and also by elements in the Peace movement, which have entertained ideas of " fairness " and illusory hopes of " appeasement " in such a policy.

In fact, the colonial demands of fascism have gone far beyond the stage of merely demanding a return of former colonies and a revision of the Versailles Treaty. The conquest of Austria and Czechoslovakia makes abundantly clear that Fascism's colonial aims are not confined merely to a return of former colonies and a re-distribution of colonial possessions. Fascism's colonial aims are part of Fascism's objective for a *complete* re-division of the Globe; for the re-partitioning of Europe itself and the enslavement of European countries in its drive for world domination.

The invasion by Fascism of Austria, Czechoslovakia and Albania has opened the way to the Near and Middle East for Fascism, that is, to a direct military threat to the colonial peoples in those regions.

*Statement issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Reference may be made to the previous statement on "Peace and the Colonial Question," published in the *Labour Monthly* of June, 1938.

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The fascist offensive, which Munich has accelerated, has thus created a new threat to the colonial peoples who are struggling for democratic rights and independence, the threat of a worse suffering and enslavement than their present one.

Fascism, in its drive for world conquest, seeks strategic bases. The colonial countries offer such strategic positions against the democracies and also possibilities for the economic and military strengthening of Fascism (food, raw materials and man power). Hence Hitler's drive for colonies, assisted by the other ends of the Fascist axis, Italy demanding colonial concessions from France, and Japan grabbing at territories in the Pacific and Far East. *Therefore the new danger confronting the peoples in these colonial countries threatened by fascism is that their struggle for independence is liable to be unscrupulously used by fascism to serve its own predatory ends, with the result that fascism is strengthened, and that they themselves would lose even those restricted liberties they still have.*

How Fascism is advancing its Colonial Offensive

Fascism, aided by the pro-Fascist elements in the imperialist countries, is attempting to entrench itself in the colonies. At the same time it uses the misguided elements in the progressive movement who support its demands. In this way, behind a smoke screen of the demand for the return of its former colonies, Fascism actively prepares its machinery for the eventual repartition of the globe. Networks of spy groups and Nazi agents have been set up in the colonial countries. In South Africa and its adjacent area of South-West Africa and Tanganyika, Fascism seeks raw materials and a strategic base. German " settlers " have been sent in and organised in Nazi organisations with German business houses giving their active support. The most violent racial propaganda calculated to stimulate and influence the existing racial chauvinism is widely spread as a means of gaining support and influence. The " superiority " of the white race and its " divine " mission to rule over the racially " inferior " colonial peoples is widely propagated.

In the Bissagos Islands, situated off the North-West Coast of Africa, German settlers have built air bases and naval bases for submarines.

Fascist agents also fasten upon and make use of any reactionary nationalist movement which has Fascist tendencies (e.g., the Malan movement of South Africa which is notoriously pro-fascist and which preaches a doctrine of isolation, thus giving Hitler a free hand). Fascism also uses as its spokesmen pro-fascist reactionaries who occupy high positions in the Governments of their countries (e.g., Oswald Pirow, Minister of Defence and Commerce in the Hertzog Government, who is Hitler's spokesman for his colonial demands).

Fascist Penetration of the National Liberation Movement

In other parts of the world where there are colonial liberation movements, and where it is necessary to gain a strategic foothold, Fascism

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adopts a different tactic. This is the " championing " of national independence for the colonial peoples. Whereas in South Africa the Nazis outdo the most violent racial chauvinists in their attempt to get support for Nazism, relegating the natives to the position of human cattle, in other parts of Africa, in Palestine and the Near East, the Nazis outdo themselves in their " concern " for the oppressed Arabs and other colonial peoples. Here they become apostles of " self-determination " pretending that they support the liberation struggles of these peoples. Their true objective, however, is to split and divert these colonial liberation movements from their true course so that Fascism can gain a foothold inside them, thereby entrenching itself in the colonial countries and using the liberation movements for its war purposes against the democracies, without of course the slightest intention of giving the colonial peoples any kind of freedom.

Significant proof of this is the Annual Report of the German General Staff for 1939, which contains plans to attack the British colonial possessions and to isolate Britain from her colonies and dominions. *It says that it is essential to support every freedom movement anywhere in the British Empire.*

A most significant example of this is the Arab movement in Palestine. In order to gain a foothold in Palestine and the Near East, one of the most vulnerable points within the British and French imperialist lines of communication, Fascism has supported the Arab liberation movement. With the use of anti-Jewish and anti-British incitement, Fascism has corrupted and tended to divert it from its true course. It has made the leader of the insurrection, the Grand Mufti, who has accepted its " support " for Arab national aspirations, its bought agent and tool.

In this way the colonial designs of Hitler are being actively worked out in Africa, the Orient, Asia and South America, and also in Canada attempts at Fascist penetration have been made. Fascism is gaining important footholds in the colonial countries, entrenching itself in the progressive liberation movements so that they should serve the war aims of Fascism for a redivision of the world in its favour.

Herein lies the new menace to the colonial peoples, the danger of falling into the trap that their fascist " friends " and " sympathisers " are preparing for them in the name of " self-determination " and " national freedom." This menace must be combated by the colonial peoples with the support of the Labour and progressive movements who are vitally concerned—for the colonial peoples could become a powerful ally against Fascism. Neglect of the interests of the colonial peoples by the Labour, democratic and peace movements opens the way to penetration by Fascism.

In this situation we have a tremendous responsibility, in order to give concrete support to the colonial peoples in their struggle for national liberation and against the menace of Fascism, we must intensify our

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fight here in this country for the independence of the colonial peoples.

What Fascism Means For Colonial Peoples

Heavy and oppressive as the lot of the colonial peoples is under existing imperialist rule, it would be immeasurably worse under Fascism, which is the most aggressive and brutal form of imperialism.

Every imperialist system means the oppression and degradation, the arresting of development of the subject peoples under its rule. The aim of every colonial people can only be for complete liberation from imperialism. But in the existing imperialist countries the mass struggle has already won certain rights, which, though limited, and precarious, are of the utmost importance for future advance. These rights would be swept away under Fascism.

In India, where the mass struggle has reached a high degree of advancement, there are powerful independent trade unions on the basis of the class struggle, which the Government is compelled to recognise; there is the right to strike, even though under limitations and interference; there is an open and influential socialist movement with a growing agitation for the legal recognition of the Communist Party; the National Congress, with the avowed aim of complete independence, is able to organise four-and-a-half-million members on this basis, to win elections and to form Ministries in the Provinces; despite restrictions, Marxist and Leninist literature is widely published and sold. All this is in complete contrast to a fascist régime even in a fascist ruling imperialist country like Hitler-Germany, let alone a fascist-ruled colonial country. All these rights would be swept away by Fascism.

Even in the most heavily subjected colonies, in Africa or the West Indies, there are still some limited rights of organisation which would be destroyed under fascism.

Further, in the non-fascist imperialist systems the working-class and democratic forces in the ruling countries have the freedom of agitation and parliamentary representation and means of pressure on the Government to assist actively in the struggle against the imperialist oppression, to expose the scandals of imperialist misrule and rally public opinion in support of the colonial peoples in the struggle to extend their rights. Our aim must be to extend the existing limited rights rapidly to full democratic rights, with a view to advancing to the goal of full national liberation, but not to go backward from these limited gains to the lower depths of fascist slavery.

The principles of the fascist colonial system are expressed with unconcealed brutality in the publications of the Nazi colonial office, which glorify the bloodthirsty Dr. Peters as the model colonial ruler.

Fascist colonial theories, drenched in racial chauvinism, pour contempt on what they term the pernicious humanitarian conceptions of the Anglo-French colonial system as opening the doors of European culture to the colonial peoples, and declare that Nazi rule will finally

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root out all such conceptions and establish the permanent inferior status of the subject peoples. Fascism, with its pretence of Aryan superiority assigns to the coloured people the status of human slaves. Fascism preaches eternal colonial oppression. It openly sneers at any attempt to raise the cultural standards of Negroes and scoffs at ever teaching them reading or writing. It stands for the regimentation of the colonial people; of exploiting their labour power to the utmost.

Blindness to the reality of the intensified enslavement which fascist colonial domination would mean, and indifference to the maintenance of the rights which have been won by painful struggle under the existing colonial system, is equivalent to betrayal of the interests of the colonial peoples.

The Slogans of Self-determination and of the Right of Secession

Communism has always fought in the forefront for the right of full self-determination of all colonial peoples, including the right of secession.

Precisely because Communists are the most serious and consistent fighters for the right of self-determination of the colonial peoples, they have the right and the duty now to give the most serious warning against the distortion of these slogans in the interests of fascist domination of the colonial peoples.

We stand for real self-determination and real independence, not for a so-called " self-determination " and " independence " which is only put forward to conceal the aims of fascist aggression and conquest.

The example of Slovakia has shown once and for all what such " self-determination " means. The Slovakian Diet, under the leadership of Nazi agents who had inserted themselves at the head of the Slovakian separatist movement, proclaimed the " independence " of Slovakia in accordance with the principles of " self-determination " and the " right of secession." Within twenty-four hours Hitler's troops were in occupation of Slovakia, and the Slovakian people had completely lost that degree of freedom and rights and autonomy they previously enjoyed. This example is a warning once and for all to all colonial peoples to be on their guard against the misuse of slogans of " independence " and " separation " when put forward by fascist agents or their Trotskyist auxiliaries.

The Leninist principle of the right of secession has never been put forward as an abstract principle to be applied at any moment without regard to concrete circumstances. Again and again Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin always insisted, with regard to the right of self-determination, on the necessity of the most careful judgment of the concrete circumstances and the international situation.

In this way the Bolshevik resolution in April, 1917, prepared under the guidance of Lenin and Stalin, declared :

> The right of nations freely to secede must not be confused with the expediency of secession of a given nation at a given moment. The party

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> of the proletariat must decide the latter question quite independently in each particular case from the standpoint of the interests of the social development as a whole and of the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat for Socialism. (Resolution of the Seventh Conference of the C.P.S.U. on the "National Question," April, 1917.)

In accordance with these basic Marxist-Leninist principles, Manuilski declared in his report to the Eighteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. in March, 1939:

> While upholding the rights of the colonial peoples to self-determination, including secession, Communists, in accordance with the doctrine of Lenin and Stalin, subordinate the realisation of this right of secession to the fundamental interests of the colonial people themselves, in the interests of defeating fascism, the mortal enemy of the working class, and in the interests of the victory of the international working class over its exploiters.

The Struggle of the Colonial Peoples Against Fascism

In the present difficult and complicated international situation the path of advance of the colonial peoples lies in unity with the Labour and democratic anti-fascist movements of the world in resolute and irreconcilable opposition to Fascism.

The Chinese and Abyssinian peoples are setting the example of such a struggle against Fascism.

In the existing world situation the immediate danger to the struggle of the colonial peoples for democratic rights and independence *comes from Fascism whose victory would throw back the national liberation movement for decades*. Fascism, the most reactionary and most brutal form of imperialism, is both directly attacking the colonial people wherever it can make headway, and at the same time invading one European country after another, destroying all democratic freedom and liberty in those countries. For the colonial peoples the threat to democracy anywhere means a threat to their own interests, the threat of destruction of even those small and restricted liberties and possibilities of independent organisation which they have precariously won from their present imperialist taskmasters, and the complete destruction of all national liberation movements. The fight against the menace of Fascism is thus the most direct concern and interest of all the colonial peoples, and is inseparably bound up with the fight for the advance of their own interests and rights and future independence.

All serious fighters for the independence of the colonial peoples must be concerned to-day with keeping the main enemy, Fascism, out of their countries. The whole mass of the colonial peoples must realise, as many sections already do, that Fascism is not the friend of any colonial people which is suffering from imperialist exploitation, and which is fighting for democratic rights and independence, but is on the contrary the most dangerous enemy of national liberation and disruptor and destroyer of the national liberation movements.

In those countries where the demand for immediate and complete

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independence is put forward by provocateurs and fascist agents in order to facilitate Fascism's plans for invasion, there the colonial peoples must be on their guard against such irresponsible and dangerous provocation. For if this were actually achieved these countries would immediately be invaded by the fascist axis. Such propaganda can only blind the colonial peoples to their main enemy who seeks to destroy even that very restricted liberty they have and objectively helps to strengthen fascism.

In the case, for example, of such countries as Tunis and Palestine, where the menace of a possible fascist military invasion and attempted conquest might easily take actual shape out of the present world situation, and where the demand for complete and immediate secession and "independence" is being propagated by fascist agents with a view to such conquest, it is obvious that the national liberation movement must take account of such a concrete situation. The first necessity is to purge the national liberation movements of fascist penetration and influence and to establish the closest contact and common working with the democratic movements and with the working class forces in the ruling country. The proposals for national self-government should in this concrete situation be combined with proposals for a military treaty of mutual aid and guarantee.

The Path of Advance of the Colonial Peoples

The struggle of the colonial peoples in the different colonial countries is governed by the particular conditions existent in each country.

In the majority of colonial countries the first step along the path to liberation lies in the conquest of elementary democratic rights which can provide the possibility of organisation and development of the national liberation movements, as well as of the working class and peasant movements. The labour and democratic movements in the imperialist ruling countries should give the fullest support to this struggle.

Where the struggle is one for elementary democratic rights, and where Fascism has already penetrated and deflected the movement, here the most active fight must be directed against the Fascist influence which has become an impediment in the path of the struggle for democratic rights. The crushing of Fascist influence inside and outside these liberation movements will clear the way for the development of the struggle with greater vigour against their imperial masters. And every advance of the colonial people creates the conditions for further advancement along the path towards complete national independence.

In the case of India, where an advanced stage of social-political development and of the national struggle has been reached, the situation raises its own special problems. Here the Indian people have developed an exceedingly powerful national liberation movement under the leadership of the Indian National Congress, which both fights for complete

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national independence and also has declared itself fully conscious of the menace of Fascism and determined that a free India shall co-operate with the peoples of democratic countries on the basis of collective security against fascist aggression. This programme of the Indian National Congress for complete independence should receive the full support of the labour and democratic movement in Britain, which should take up the demand for the convening of a Constituent Assembly elected by universal suffrage to draw up the constitution of a free India in place of the undemocratic Federal Constitution imposed by the Government of India Act.

At the same time fascist penetration, which is extremely active in India, requires to be actively resisted. Fascist penetration in India seeks to disrupt the unity of the national movement, to promote communal conflicts and to present the issues of foreign policy and war in forms which would imply the indifference of the Indian people to the world issue of democracy and fascism or would even suggest that Fascism is a potential ally of the Indian people against imperialism. Any such propaganda requires to be actively opposed by the Indian national movement, the unity of the national movement defended and the closest co-operation maintained with the world democratic movement on the basis of a common foreign policy alongside unity in the struggle for Indian national liberation.

Responsibility of the Labour and Democratic Movement

The exploitation of the colonial peoples by imperialism and their deprivation of democratic rights has created fertile soil for fascist penetration. Where a struggle for the most elementary democratic rights is being waged; where colonial legislation has made illegal trade unions and mass organisations, there Fascism steps in as a " sympathiser " and " supporter," gains a foothold and diverts and pollutes the liberation movement. Similarly, where race-hatred and anti-colour feeling exists and is even encouraged, there Fascism can gain a footing by pandering to and whipping up this racial feeling.

This situation throws an especially sharp responsibility at the present time on the labour, democratic and peace movements in the ruling imperialist countries, and above all in Britain. Great harm has been done by the propaganda of Pacifism in the imperialist countries, of the type represented by Lansbury and the Peace Pledge Union, which advocates friendship with Hitler and Mussolini and the handing over of colonial peoples to their domination by a re-distribution of colonies or of rights of colonial exploitation as a supposed measure of " appeasement." Similar harm has been done by the " appeasement " propaganda of important sections of the official Labour movement, as illustrated in the speech of Bevin at the Southport Labour Party Conference, which advocated " bringing in Germany and Italy on the ground floor " in the exploitation of colonial peoples. Similar harm is done by the

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Trotskyist and semi-Trotskyist type of propaganda which, in the name of repudiating existing imperialist domination, in practice acts as the apologist of fascist aggressive aims in relation to the colonial peoples. All this facilitates the path of fascist penetration among the colonial peoples and drives a wedge between the labour and democratic movement and the colonial peoples.

The official Labour and progressive movements have not given the colonial question the attention and study that its vital importance in the present world situation demands. The right to national independence of the colonial peoples is recognised—but only in abstract principle. It is dismissed with an affirmation of the rights of all peoples ultimately to self-determination. And the Mandate system is put forward as representing a step in advance for the colonial peoples. Is the Mandate system a step forward along the path to independence of the colonial peoples ? It is not.

The territories at present under mandate rule were divided up in the old imperialist manner among the victorious powers without the consent of the native peoples. The mandates were framed by the powers which had taken over the territories, and this action was endorsed by the League. The mandatories undertook solemn obligations to fulfil on behalf of the League. But these obligations did not give the League any control over the administration of these territories or their disposition, with the result that the mandatory system is no improvement on the old imperialist system. Imperialist oppression and the use of troops has been carried on against the native population in mandated territories. (Iraq and Syria in 1924; South-West Africa in 1922; Samoa in 1929). In Palestine up till this day the use of troops against the Arabs has been a common feature of mandatory rule. There is, of course, at the same time, denial of democratic rights, restrictions of freedom of speech and organisation, rule by ordinance, etc. Long hours are enforced and miserably low wages are paid. Clearly this is no different from the old Imperialism.

The most dangerous features in the present situation are the proposals to extend the mandate system and the establishment of a plan for inter-imperialist control of colonies. In this dangerous scheme of inter-imperialism the fascist powers along with the other imperialist powers would jointly exploit the colonial countries. Such a plan is in fact a concealed method bringing in fascism to exploit the colonial peoples, and must mean a strengthening of the basis of fascism.

On the other hand far from mitigating the rule of imperialism over the colonies it would actually strengthen the imperialist control uniting all Fascist and Imperialist powers in opposition to the desires of the colonial peoples to achieve democratic rights and freedom.

The mandatory system, in any form, means the continuation of the old imperialist exploitation and domination behind the pious smoke-screen of keeping the more backward peoples under the tutelage of

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the Great Powers till they become fit for self-government. *And this creates the most favourable conditions for Fascist penetration.* Whereas the winning of democratic rights by the colonial peoples cuts the ground from beneath Fascism's feet and draws in hundreds of thousands of peoples into the system of collective security.

A Charter of Democratic Rights for the Colonial Peoples

How can the progressive forces, and particularly the working class of Great Britain, best give help to the colonial peoples ?

First and foremost, full assistance should be given to the struggle of the colonial peoples for democratic rights. At the same time the fascist colonial demands, whether presented directly or indirectly in the forms of proposals for some kind of inter-imperialist system of joint exploitation with Fascism, should be vigorously opposed.

The support of the struggle of the colonial peoples for democratic rights and liberties should take practical forms, such as the development of closer links between the Trade Union, Labour and Progressive Movements of this country and the National Liberation, Trade Union and Peasant Movements in the colonies. The sending of fraternal delegations from Co-operative Guilds, Trade Unions, etc., to the colonial countries. The active and direct assistance by the Trade Union movement of this country for the building of a strong Trade Union movement in each colony. The strengthening of active agitation within the ruling country against every glaring example of oppression and restriction of rights and liberty and to give full support for the extension of rights.

For this purpose a clear programme for the immediate extension of democratic rights and liberties to all colonial peoples should be put forward. This requires to be vigorously propagated by the democratic forces all over the world and should be a Charter of Rights for the colonial peoples which should become one of the principal planks accepted by the Peace movement. Every endeavour must be made to ensure it becoming an integral part of any People's Front programme and of the programme of a progressive government.

Such a Charter should include :

1. Universal adult suffrage and democratic representative institutions.
2. Compulsory free universal education.
3. Freedom of speech, press, organisation.
4. Full rights for Political, Trade Union and Peasant organisations and a minimum level of labour and social legislation.
5. Repeal of Poll Tax and Pass Laws and rule by Ordinance or similar extraordinary measure.

Alongside this Charter of Rights for the colonial peoples, the demand should be supported for immediate self-determination for the Indian people on the basis of free election of a Constituent Assembly by

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universal suffrage to determine freely their own form of constitution.

Such an immediate Charter of Rights provides the best basis for a strengthening of the national liberation movements and for the defence of the colonial peoples in the present concrete world situation. This Charter of Rights is not an alternative to the aim of national self-determination but is the best path of advance in the immediate conditions to meet the grave dangers and the fascist menace, and ensure the advance towards complete independence and national self-determination.

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Anglo-Nazi Economic Co-operation

BY JOHN AUSTIN

ONCE BITTEN, TWICE SHY. Under popular pressure Mr. Chamberlain has been forced to pretend that appeasement is dead. Since Munich the obstacles on the royal road to the fascist domination of Europe—annexation by the threat of force—have become very much more formidable. Advance by more devious routes—unfamiliar territory to the masses—has been advised by Hitler's " Fifth Column " in London and Paris. Even Ribbentrop, apparently, concurs. The present object of the friends of Fascism is clearly to maintain Nazism in good economic health until the time is ripe for the next diplomatic or military coup. And by all accounts economic props are sorely needed. Nazi " diplomatic " triumphs of the past few months have done little to alleviate the pressing problem of raw materials for feeding the over-expanded war economy. For in the meantime, Germany's export trade has been falling away. Her wherewithal to purchase in the world's markets has been shrinking. No one is in a better position to appreciate the potential dangers of this situation than the leaders of the Federation of British Industries and the directors of the Bank of England.

Those who doubted that there is a deep bond of sympathy between the leaders of British industry and their opposite numbers of the Germany of to-day, and the even greater number who refused to believe that the two groups could have any wide affinity of interests, received a shock when the first really hard news of collaboration reached the eyes and ears of the public. The timing of the announcement—characteristic of the singleness of purpose and the superb self-confidence of the British ruling class—was appallingly bad. On the day that Hitler's troops marched into Prague, the F.B.I. announced that its delegation to the conference at Düsseldorf had concluded a draft agreement on co-operation in the export trade with the Reichsgruppe-industrie, the Nazi counterpart of the F.B.I. In the atmosphere of rising public indignation directed against Nazi aggression, the announcement naturally created a storm. Four days later Halifax was forced to state that British Government intervention—necessary to ratify the projected agreement—" had to be and must be indefinitely postponed." The word " postponed " was highly significant and uneasiness was enhanced by the determined attitude of the F.B.I. The *Financial News* wrote :

> The F.B.I. shows no sign of cancelling the agreement, nor does it

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> seem to be in any way affected by the events of the past week. In essence, therefore, the talks are still on, and while the agreement remains undenounced, there is no guarantee that it will not be ultimately translated into fact. (March 21, 1939).

Two days later the Prime Minister raised suspicions to a new height by declaring :

> I wish to make it clear, however, that there is no desire on the part of H.M. Government to stand in the way of any reasonable efforts on the part of Germany to expand her export trade. On the contrary, we were on the point of discussing in the most friendly way the possibility of trade arrangements which would have benefited both countries when the events took place which, for the time being at any rate, put a stop to those discussions.

By way of contrast the United States Government expressed its condemnation of Nazi aggression in the most practical and unequivocal way possible by choosing this moment to impose a special 25 per cent. anti-dumping duty on German goods to offset the bounty paid to exporters by the German Government.

The full text of the agreement—published with an air of pride and delight by the F.B.I. on the very day of Halifax's "postponement" speech—throws a glaring light on the closeness of relations between British and Nazi big business. It takes for granted, as the most natural thing in the world, that the industrialists of the two countries should arrange with their respective governments for the joint exploitation of the world's markets. With touching solicitude for the difficulties of the German partners, busily building up one of the most formidable war machines for aggression the world has ever known, it recognises that one of the main objects of export trade is "to provide a volume of foreign currency sufficient for their economic (sic) needs." It harps constantly upon the necessity of eliminating competition and states that the aim "is to secure as complete co-operation as possible throughout the industrial structure of their respective countries"—which can only mean that the F.B.I. has now openly declared that its aim is the Nazification of Britain. The kernel of the proposed deal, however, is revealed in clause 8 which, with the democratic United States firmly in mind, recognises that a specific trade deal might go awry if "some other country" refuses to become a party to it. In that case, the line is clear :

> In such circumstances it may be necessary for the organisations to obtain the help of their Governments, and the two organisations agree to collaborate in seeking that help.

In short, the F.B.I. contemplates the use of the British taxpayers' money to drive America out of overseas markets for the benefit of Nazi Germany. The Düsseldorf agreement was certainly a breach of the spirit, if not of the letter, of the Anglo-American Trade Agreement, which was so bitterly opposed by sections of the F.B.I. and which was concluded with so much ballyhoo only a few weeks previously.

Given the situation it is probably the frankest and most cynical

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document of its kind ever drawn up. It is, in fact, the Appeasement Charter, for not only does it define the main aims of the appeasers in some detail but it reveals the whole economic—as opposed to the strictly political—case for collaboration with the Nazis. The prospect of a strengthening of British trade in (particularly) South America and the Far East with German help, at the expense of the Americans, is a pleasant one. Dreams of an Anglo-German world trade domination, which have been harboured for years in both countries by the more far-seeing industrialists and bankers, were on the verge of realisation. No wonder the F.B.I. were proud of their agreement !

Against the background of the Düsseldorf deal, the reasons for the Chamberlain Government's policy in the Balkans, for the Czech gold scandal and for the generosity with which bankers and industrialists are apparently prepared to treat Franco, stand out in sharp relief.

Procrastination has been the keynote of British handling of the urgent Balkan problem. Roumania is a case in point. Prompt action by Britain on the requisite scale could have snatched Roumania safely out of the closing Nazi economic stranglehold at any time since Munich. Probably it could still be done fairly easily, for the Roumanians themselves are past masters at the art of procrastination and have thus been politely delaying the work of the swarm of Hitler's envoys who are trying to hustle them into signing away control over every economic activity. Even the most partial Chamberlain supporter in the City, however, does not claim that the Anglo-Roumanian agreement is likely to stand in Hitler's way. A paltry £5 million credit, mainly for the purchase of arms—which in the event of war may well be used by Hitler rather than against him—and the agreement to purchase up to 200,000 tons of Roumanian wheat from the next harvest, if available at world prices, certainly will not put a spoke in the Nazi wheel. Yet the requirements, if Roumania is to be saved from becoming a complete economic —and therefore political—vassal of Germany, are clear and simple.

The Nazi aim is to make Roumania part of Germany's Green Belt in the Balkans—a reservoir for her raw material needs, grain, oil, metals. Always commanding a dominating position in Roumania's foreign trade, Germany's hold has been strengthened in recent years by all the devices of financial trickery and duress emanating from the fertile brain of Dr. Schacht. One of the fundamental principles of the Schacht policy was to tie up the victim by making his agricultural community utterly dependent upon Germany for the sale of its produce. By paying high prices for farm products Germany has won the goodwill of landowner and peasant and has shifted the cost onto the industrialist and town worker. Starved of capital and forced to take in exchange for wheat and oil only those goods which Germany chooses to send, Roumania is denied the requisites for industrialisation which her rapidly increasing population demands and without which the already low standard of living is being forced lower and lower. It is absolutely

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essential, if Roumania is not to fall completely into the economic and political domination of the Nazis that she should be supplied with free exchange to purchase the capital goods she needs from Britain, France and America. And this would be the easiest thing for Britain to supply—if she had the will. Not the slightest difficulty was experienced by the Chamberlain Government in extending to Turkey—a very different political proposition—a credit of not only £6 millions for arms purchases but also an additional £10 millions for the purchase of capital goods in this country although Germany has as much justification for claiming Turkey as her economic satellite. And the early addition to these Turkish credits of a further large sum is freely rumoured. Turkey, however, stands at the cross-roads on the route to the East. Until it is quite certain which way the Fascist cat is going to jump His Majesty's Imperial Government can hardly allow this important cross-roads to come under the domination of the axis, nor can the Nazis claim with any reasonableness that their primary aim in Turkey is to bring her into their Green Belt.

Despite considerable pressure and a constant reiteration of the facts behind the urgent need, the British Government has steadfastly refused to take any effective steps to rescue Roumania. It is quite clear that in the circumstances hardly any amount of credit for arms would be of the slightest use. All the other provisions of the much-boosted Anglo-Roumanian trade pact are riddled with holes including the ridiculous promise to buy 200,000 tons of wheat, *if available at world prices*. The whole essence of Roumania's difficulty is that as Germany is willing to pay prices higher than world prices, including the Roumanian export subsidy, Roumanian wheat cannot be " available at world prices." The Chamberlain Government has no intention of placing Roumania, nor any of the other Balkan countries, in a position to resist German domination. With characteristic frankness the F.B.I. as recently as mid-May gave an admirable statement of the big business view in its quarterly bulletin. With that warm appreciation of Nazi difficulties which was characteristic of the Düsseldorf agreement, the review points out that Germany obtained no relief from her immediate economic troubles by her annexations of Austria and Czechoslovakia, that her crying need is still for raw materials rather than manufactures, and it enters a plea for the formation of " complementary economic units in Central and South-Eastern Europe." It goes on to complain of the " multiplicity of independent nationalities " and suggests that a good solution would be for the states of South-Eastern Europe " to forego a sufficient measure of national liberty " to make complementary economic union with Germany possible. There can be no doubt that the F.B.I., at any rate, is clinging firmly to the principles of the Appeasement Charter.

That the Bank of England and the " National " Government adhere to the same set of principles is equally clear from their behaviour over

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the Czech assets held in London. Immediately after the invasion of Prague, the "National" Government was forced to bow to popular demand and pass the Czechoslovakia (Banking Accounts Restriction) Act blocking all Czech balances held in this country and apparently designed to ensure (1) that the Nazis should not get at least that part of the booty domiciled here (as they succeeded in doing after the Anschluss) and (2) that there should be something to satisfy British creditors of Czechoslovakia. It is now apparent that the passing of the Act, like Chamberlain's Birmingham speech, was pure camouflage.

On Friday, May 19, several London dailies carried the report that the German authorities had obtained control of Czech gold, amounting to about £6 millions, which represented that portion of the assets of the Czech National Bank held in London in the name of the Bank for International Settlements, and that German delegates were in London negotiating for the transfer of the balance of the London Czech assets. On the same day Chamberlain stated in the House that "the whole story is a mare's nest." This was a plain untruth, for on the following Monday, the newspapers having stuck to their guns, he was forced to admit under a fire of questions and cross-questions, that the report was true except for unimportant detail: the gold had been handed over and "informal talks" had been going on with regard to the other blocked Czech assets. In the subsequent Parliamentary battle between the Front Bench and members of all parties trying to get at the truth of the matter, Simon's wrigglings, evasions and contortions were highly reminiscent of the Cabinet's behaviour over non-intervention and German and Italian participation in the Spanish war. First, he pleaded he knew nothing—officially or unofficially—of either the Czech gold, the workings of the B.I.S., or the close connection of its Executive Committee with the Bank of England through Norman and Niemeyer. Information from Paris that the French directors of the B.I.S. had strongly protested against the proposal to hand over the gold—when it was first raised a few days after the Hitler invasion of Czechoslovakia—and that Norman and Niemeyer had supported the Nazis and the pro-Nazi B.I.S. president, Beyer, against their French colleagues, leading to representations by the French Government to Whitehall, eventually elicited an admission from Simon that he knew about the proposed transaction as early as the end of March. He excused his failure to make any effort to stop the transfer—which he was finally forced to stigmatise as "very deplorable"—on purely legalistic grounds. If the Treasury had no power to stop the transfer, the Bank of England certainly had, so Simon had to fall back on the very convenient fiction that the Treasury has no control over the Bank. According to Sir John's Law Officers, the Treasury had no power to prevent the Bank from obeying the instructions of its customers. Unfortunately for Simon and Norman, no banker has the right—by the code of law of any civilised country—to comply with instructions which he knows were

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obtained under duress. In this case the whole world knew. Yet it apparently never occurred to the directors of the Bank (nor to Simon to suggest to the Bank) that it should put the matter to the test of a legal decision. No. The Nazis were desperately hard up for foreign exchange ; their friends in England seized with indecent haste upon this apparently easy way of helping them. Despite all Sir John's " deploring," he has refused point-blank to do anything which might prevent a similar thing happening again. All suggestions that Britain should withdraw from the B.I.S., now revealed as merely a channel through which funds are handed over to Nazi Germany, have been blandly turned down. A private bill to force the Bank to consult with the Treasury on all matters affecting the national interest did not stand a chance.

The behaviour of the National Government and British business interests in the Far East over the incident at Tientsin fits neatly into the framework of this policy of collaboration with the Fascist powers. Protests against the Government's " inaction " in the face of Japanese threats to Britain's eastern trade—loud enough eighteen months ago—have long since dried up. The principal reason is that many British firms in China, much to their surprise, are to-day making more money than ever. They have found that the somewhat uneasy co-operation with the Japanese has paid handsomely. In the circumstances, they find it difficult (1) to believe that the Japanese—with the final share-out in view—are doing more than attempting to increase their bargaining power; and (2) to countenance any action on the part of the British Government which might upset the present profitable set-up. Moreover, as the war drags on and the Japanese look as far off victory as ever, it becomes more and more likely that if and when the Japanese exploiters are finally driven out of China, exploiters of other nationalities might have to go too.

With the Japanese militarists, as with the Nazis, British big business is finding more and more points on which there is community of interest and fewer on which there is serious rivalry. Complaints of German competition have also disappeared since the F.B.I. business chiefs got together with their Nazi counterparts. Actually, the manufacturing and trading activities of the two countries are to a great extent complementary—a fact always recognised by the F.B.I.—and the increased pressure of German competition about which there was so much complaint, was the result of the Nazi struggle for foreign exchange. Logically, " unfair " competition should disappear if this foreign exchange is made available—hence the F.B.I. policy. Through cartel arrangements, in chemicals, steel tubes, etc., the relations of the dominating sections of British industry with Germany have always been very close. None of the leading sections of British industry has much of a stake in South-Eastern Europe, which is important only for minor branches of the textile and machinery industries. Far more important to British big business are the profits derived

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from sales to Germany of colonial raw materials, nickel, tin, rubber, while most of the leading British monopoly or semi-monopoly organisations—Unilever, Imperial Chemical Industries, Dunlop Rubber—and many of the banks have large blocked balances in Germany which they hope one day to be able to withdraw. The attitude of the dominating sections of British industry, of the bankers whose interests are bound up with big business and of the National Government which is the servant of both is, therefore, easily understandable. They are quite willing—indeed, anxious—to let Germany have South-East Europe as part of her Green Belt, for this is the one way they can lend much-needed support to their Nazi partners without seriously disturbing their own interests. The Germans for their part are delighted to co-operate with the British jointly to fight America in the world's markets. The understanding has the added advantage—to both sides—that it fortifies the Nazi "bulwark against the spread of Bolshevism" and holds out to the British industrialist the prospect of being able to subject his own working class to that form of "control" which he so much admires in Germany. Indeed, in private conversation, that is frankly admitted to be one of the chief requisites, for free speech and expression in this country have already gravely handicapped progress towards rapprochement with the Nazis. Hints are thrown out that freedom of speech and action would be an even more grievous handicap when it eventually came to the more serious business of joint action for reopening for capitalist exploitation the markets of the Ukraine. . . .

The F.B.I. is working hard to get those Düsseldorf talks re-opened. Chamberlain, Halifax, Simon and Norman, as their recent speeches and actions show, are just as keen.

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Dilution and the Unions

BY JOHN FOWLER

THE THREAT OF dilution is becoming already a large-scale actuality. " Dilution " may be taken to mean the placing of less-skilled, lower-paid labour on jobs normally done by a higher grade; at present it primarily affects two armament and near-armament industries, engineering and building. But it has a far wider importance. Although the workers in the armament and near-armament industries bear the brunt of the attack, any concession on their part would be followed up by the employers in other industries. Again, the dilutees and trainees themselves are being drawn from every industry and area.

The question can be dealt with under four heads :

(1) The 1938 negotiations, and the position of the organisations concerned.
(2) The piecemeal introduction of dilution since the arms programme commenced.
(3) The difficulties of the Unions in resisting dilution.
(4) The issue to-day.

The Government did not at first approach the engineers. The building unions were selected instead, and as early as May, 1937, it was agreed to establish a tripartite committee of the unions (through the N.F.B.T.O.), the employers and the government.

In March, 1938, at the time of the Austrian crisis, the government decided to approach the engineers. Meetings were arranged with the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (March 24) and the A.E.U. (April 4). In order to prepare the way for these meetings by obtaining " goodwill," as well as for other reasons, the Government arranged to meet the T.U.C. on March 23. At the two meetings with the engineering unions, Sir Thomas Inskip made no specific proposals, confining himself to a general propaganda speech (reported in the Journal of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, June, 1938). Despite this stirring appeal, the government received their first serious setback at the meeting with the A.E.U.

The Government, having done their best to prepare the way, left the field open to the Engineering Employers' Federation, which met the Unions concerned on May 25. The date is important, since it disposes of the pretext of a " shortage of skilled labour." Far from there being a shortage at this time, many more skilled engineers were unemployed than a year earlier.

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At this meeting specific proposals of dilution were at last put forward by the Secretary of the Employers' Federation. The following extracts are taken from the report in the A.S.W. Journal (July, 1938):

I want to put before you certain matters for your consideration:

(1) We do not suggest that, arising out of this emergency, there should be any change in working practice where the class of labour usually employed is available; in other words, we are not asking for change for the sake of change.

(2) It might be considered that if a shortage of labour were found in one trade, that shortage—and now, of course, I am speaking of skilled labour—might be supplemented temporarily by skilled labour from another trade.

(3) The position might be eased by supplementing temporarily, where skilled labour is not available, by semi-skilled labour.

(4) You might consider, too, the possible part which women could play in jobs for which they are capable.

(5) It is a matter for discussion whether some less restrictive outlook should not be held in regard to the overtime agreement.

(6) Finally, I have no doubt you would desire that there should be a registration of any change in order that we should have some guide to a restoration of normal practice when these exceptional conditions cease.

In expanding these points, the employers laid particular stress on (2)—the relaxing of demarcation rules between the skilled trades—pointing out that this would bring increased employment to the membership of some unions. In this attempt to divide the unions they were only partially successful; nevertheless, the minutes of this Conference bring out very clearly the importance in a crisis of the closest joint working between the unions in the industry.

The proposals as a whole were rejected by the representatives both of the A.E.U. and the Confederation, and the rejection was endorsed by subsequent resolutions of both bodies. At the Blackpool T.U.C., however, the President of the Confederation was one of those who supported the General Council against the A.E.U. on this question.

Dilution is no new issue in engineering; it dates from the introduction of semi-automatic and specialised machine tools at the beginning of the century, and was greatly accelerated by the war. In 1914 sixty per cent. of the labour in engineering was in the "skilled" category, against only thirty per cent. in 1933. But the process has been speeded-up since 1935, especially in the armaments and aircraft sections of the industry.

The dilution proposals put forward by the employers in 1938 (see above) covered:

(a) relaxing "demarcation" agreements.

(b) introduction of semi-skilled male workers.

(c) introduction of women.

The employers had already done a good deal along these lines before they asked the unions for help in overcoming opposition. Demarcation agreements had been considerably relaxed, especially in introducing

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shipbuilding labour in the aircraft industry. Boy labour was widely introduced. In general engineering, the number of boys aged 16-17 jumped from 26,000 in 1935 to 48,000 in 1937; and in the motor vehicles, cycles, and aircraft trades, from 14,500 in 1935 to 27,270 in 1937. Women were also introduced; but, unlike the 1914-18 period, female labour does not yet constitute the main form of dilution.

Judged both by the numbers introduced and the number of disputes caused, semi-skilled male labour is the main form of dilution introduced by the employers, who realise that it is less easy to detect. Of the 250,000 males which have entered engineering since 1935, the vast majority were semi-skilled. Some 2,000 enter the industry annually from coal-mining, and about 1,000 from agriculture. Into the building industry there come about 5,000 annually from mining, and 6,000 from agriculture.

The problem of training dilutees, even to a semi-skilled standard, has been a difficult one for the employers. Some large firms, particularly aircraft firms, have developed private training schemes. The Government, however, has obligingly developed its training centres to meet this difficulty. The number of men entering employment after training in Government centres has increased as follows:

1933	..	3,728
1934	..	4,819
1935	..	7,059
1936	..	10,398
1937	..	10,424
1938	..	12,031

totalling nearly 40,000 in the last four years alone. Of these, 10,566 have entered the building industry, and some 22,000 have entered engineering. They are employed on semi-skilled work, and in engineering probably a third are paid below the customary rates; in the Southampton area, for example, trainees in the aircraft factories are paid labourers' rates.

In September, 1938, soon after the Unions' rejection of the dilution proposals, the Government, willing as always to help the arms firms, decided to provide 5,928 places for training in engineering, instead of 4,178. At present, therefore, trainees are finding employment in engineering at the rate of 8,200 annually.

The introduction of dilution has produced some resistance and caused many disputes. In resisting, however, the workers concerned have in many cases found their hands tied by the conciliation machinery to which the Unions have agreed. In engineering there is the notorious "York Procedure," by which a dispute is referred to works conference, then to local conference, then to central conference, during which lengthy procedure the employer has full right to carry through the desired changes in the shop.

In the building industry local disputes (other than those involving

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the application of decisions of the National Wages and Conditions Council) are considered in turn by local joint conciliation boards, district joint councils, regional joint councils, and, in the last resort, by the National Conciliation Board.

Similar machinery exists in many industries but its worst features only appear in an industry undergoing dilution. For the employer can introduce dilution (as at Rolls Royce recently), sack a shop steward (as at Siemens), or de-grade labour (as at Rootes) at his will; when the procedure is complete and "failure to agree" is recorded, the new position is established.

Since the Unions bind themselves not to strike while the procedure is running its course, the result is a very high proportion of unofficial strikes. In industry as a whole this proportion is higher than generally realised; in 1936, according to a statement by the Minister of Labour, 435 strikes (out of a total of 818) were unofficial—*i.e.*, more than one-half. In engineering the ratio is higher still—about nine strikes in every ten are unofficial.

The same tendency is shown in the Registrar's figures for dispute pay. In the metal, engineering, and shipbuilding unions, the average dispute pay per member was 8d. in 1937, as against 1s. 4d. in textiles, 1s. 5d. in transport, and 2s. 4d. in mining; the figure for industry as a whole stood at 1s. in 1936.

It is not suggested, of course, that every issue should be forced to a dispute; but the only basis for successful negotiation, especially on issues of dilution, is to have the official strike weapon ready at hand. Any tendency towards industrial pacifism, towards giving up the strike weapon, will inevitably be followed up, just as it was in 1914-18, by the legal prohibition of strikes. The campaign for this form of industrial conscription has already commenced; *The Times*, in its leader of April 19, wrote:

> It is to be hoped also that some attempt will be made, preferably by direct Government negotiations with the Trade Unions, to limit the scope for industrial strikes, as well as to secure temporary concessions on dilution of labour and kindred questions.

This quotation, it will be seen, links the demand for industrial conscription with proposals for a new dilution campaign. Many other quotations could be given from the capitalist press demanding wholesale dilution to cope with an alleged shortage of skilled engineers. Clearly a new attack is developing. Discussions have been proceeding at the Ministry of Labour, and at the beginning of April conversations were reported between the T.U.C. General Council and the Minister of Labour on "labour control in war time." The campaign also reflected itself in the resolution passed by the A.E.U. National Committee in early June:

> This N.C. instructs the executive to continue to oppose all forms of dilution until such time as the whole of the available skilled engineering workers are absorbed into industry at full-time employment.

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> In order to assist in the provisions of the means of defence, the executive be authorised to meet the Minister of Supply and the Engineering Employers to ascertain the extent of the proposed expansion of our industry.
>
> And to instruct the District Committees on the steps necessary to preserve our trade rights in order that, on a return to normal times, we may resume the recognised and normal practices of the industry.

The dangers inherent in such a " non-political " resolution are evident. The suggestion that the unions should concern themselves only with the " economic aspects " has been pressed by the T.U.C. General Council from the first. In a letter sent to the Prime Minister in April, 1938, it stated that " Its conduct in dealing with any Government on behalf of the Trade Union Movement must be regulated by industrial and not political considerations." Apparently it raised no objection, however, to the propaganda speeches delivered on behalf of the Government by Sir Thomas Inskip to the General Council and the Engineering Unions. The Government is permitted to use political arguments, but the Unions are not permitted to reply.

The essence of the dilution issue, as Chamberlain well knows, is political. Under a People's Government, led by the Trade Union and Labour Movement, the Unions would be prepared to co-operate actively in increasing arms output for the defence of democracy, since in any scheme they would be given full powers to protect themselves. But under the Chamberlain Government, any concessions would be treated as a sign of weakness, and followed up by far-reaching attacks on the freedom of the Unions. With the Unions well in hand, the Government would then be able to throw over all pretence of a democratic foreign policy. The pretence would have served its turn.

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Air Raid Precautions

BY S. C. SAUNDERS

A.R.P. BECOMES MORE important with each step that the Chamberlain Government takes on the one side towards increasing the danger of air attacks on Great Britain and on the other towards preventing the realisation of effective protection for the population.

Any article on the matter must of necessity contain a background showing the technical issues involved, and the first point that must be made is that, in the words of the official A.R.P. Instructors, "the civil population is now to be regarded as a legitimate military objective." This is true for many reasons. Attacks on civilians, particularly on unprotected civilians, hamper essential production and can to some extent undermine "the will to win." When dealing with fascist attackers, however, there is an additional reason, and that is simple fascist beastliness, as exemplified in Spain and China, and in Signor Gayda's advice to England and France to photograph the main streets of Paris and London before they become the haunts of goats and owls.

With regard to the actual raids, it must be regarded as at least possible that in the first weeks of war, an enemy will throw all his efforts into delivering a smashing knock-out blow by means of repeated mass air attacks on the main centres of population and production. In this event the intensity of the raids will tend to drop off after the opening period because of the enormous expenditure of material resources and skilled man power, and give place to raids intended to keep the population continually harassed.

We can gain some conception of the scale of the attack from such authoritative sources as Mr. Oliver Simmonds, M.A., F.R.Ae.S., M.I.Ae.F., who, besides being in the aircraft industry himself, is in an excellent position to obtain reliable information because of his association with the Conservative Parliamentary A.R.P. Committee. In his presidential address to the A.R.P. Institute on March 14, 1939, he estimated, having taken all factors into consideration, that Germany alone could dispatch 3,000 tons of bombs per day to this country (270 tons were dropped during the whole of the last war). After making various allowances for active defence and bombs falling in the countryside, he considers that, in the absence of efficient shelters, the casualties in the early stages would be of the order of 100,000 killed and 200,000 wounded per week (this figure should be compared with those given below of casualties anticipated by the Government). Confirmation that the figures would be of this order are obtainable from various sources.*

*Air Commodore MacNeece Foster, member of the British Commission for the Exchange of Spanish War Prisoners, assumes from 100 to 500 machines per raid (say 150 to 750 tons of bombs). (*Daily Telegraph*, May 5, 1939). General Miaja states that Spanish raids, if carried out on a grand scale, could have caused a million dead. (*Evening Standard*, May 6, 1939).

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What steps is the Government taking to prevent such a holocaust?

Britain has been zoned into so-called "vulnerable" and "non-vulnerable" areas. From certain parts of the "vulnerable" areas some 3,000,000 people are to be evacuated into the "non-vulnerable" areas. So far as England is concerned (Scottish figures are not available) the position in round figures is as follows:

Vulnerable area population (after evacuation), 22,000,000 (to be provided with Government shelters).

Non-vulnerable area population (including evacuees), 18,000,000 (not to be provided with Government shelters).

In other words, for approximately half the population no protection is planned except such protection as is provided by geographical position.

Those people who remain in the "vulnerable areas" are, if their earned income is less than £250 per annum, to be sheltered in an Anderson steel shelter, a strutted basement, or in some other form of household shelter, and no difference is recognised between the danger of Bethnal Green and Orpington.

Now although the Anderson shelter is certainly safer than no shelter at all, it suffers from many grave defects, the most important of which is that it cannot be erected in many places where shelter is most needed. Hampstead, for instance, with a population of 90,000 can use only 1,230; Salford Corporation state that of 30,000 houses entitled to shelters, 26,000 have no space for their erection; Holborn cannot use a single one. Furthermore, in many cases where they have been erected, requests to remove them have been made because of their "nuisance value"; those in Carlsbad Street, Islington, for instance, although they had been sunk only two feet instead of the regulation four, soon had three inches of water on the floor. (*Daily Express*, March 1, 1939).

What then of the strutted basements, on which the Government is placing more and more stress? The fact is that these are nothing short of death traps in by far the majority of cases, as witness the report of the Institution of Structural Engineers (February, 1939):

> The Committee cannot too strongly emphasise that in their view the strutting of timber floors in the basements of ordinary domestic buildings is totally inadequate to resist the weight of loads of this character, and that they are therefore liable to be death traps rather than refuges.

Furthermore they provide only equivalent protection to an open pit of the same area as the basement.

A similar lack of planning and complete disregard for the saving of life is evident in the Government's casualty and evacuation schemes. The casualty scheme is based on the use of existing hospitals and the position is well summed up in a letter to the *Lancet* (March 18, 1939) from three doctors, two of whom are Medical Officers for A.R.P. in local government service. They state

> We have been forced to the conclusion that in almost every case the present hospitals are utterly unsuited (for A.R.P.). They are not only

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> unprotected; in most cases they are unprotectable. Moreover, they are usually in the wrong place, away from railway lines, and with impossible approaches. . . . In our considered opinion, unless there is a proper system of deep shelters and evacuation, no medical organisation, however ingenious and however courageously worked, can be immune from possible breakdown. So far as we know, every responsible member of the medical profession who has expressed himself on the subject is in agreement with this statement.

The evacuation scheme proposes to accommodate some 95 per cent to 98 per cent. of the evacuees in billets, and half of these billets are in urban areas. Many of these areas are already highly dangerous (*i.e.*, Reading, Folkestone, etc.) and will be made even more so. No provision is made for any air raid shelter, neither has money been earmarked nor provision made for the quite essential task of increasing the public services (water, sewage disposal, etc.) to deal with the very great increase of population which will result.

But the loudest critic of the Government scheme is—the Government scheme. Speaking of the air raid casualty service, Mr. Robert Bernays, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, stated :

> Civilian casualties will almost certainly run into hundreds of thousands in a very short time. (*Daily Telegraph*, February 25, 1939).

In the same speech he said that 300,000 beds would be available for air raid casualties in England and Wales alone. So without the need to go further into technicalities we can see just what value the Government themselves place on their shelters.

But is it possible to take more effective steps ? The answer is an emphatic " Yes." It is a relatively simple technical problem, which can be solved in various ways, to design a system of shelters giving any desired degree of protection right up to complete safety against " bulls-eye " hits from the heaviest bombs, and to site them so that everyone can reach safety within whatever period is considered necessary. The architects for the Finsbury Borough Council planned a system of shelters for the Borough which in fact assumed the then official warning period of seven minutes, and which were designed to withstand all effects up to direct hits from half ton bombs. The scheme would cost about £11 per head.

Many other schemes for virtually complete protection have been produced, including those for Stoke Newington and Hampstead, prepared by a very famous engineer, Dr. Oscar Faber, and that produced by the engineers and architects of the A.R.P. Co-ordinating Committee who proposed sheltering the whole population of St. Pancras in tunnels which would again cost about £11 per head.

Further to drive home the point, General Sir Edmund Ironside was recently interviewed by the Press in Gibraltar. He said :

> No good building shelter above ground. What protection is that ? We are going into the Rock, all 15,000 of us. . . . What we are doing here is the kind of A.R.P. they need at home. (*Daily Express*, May 26, 1939).

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It is interesting to note that one of the Gibraltar tunnel shelters will hold 10,000 people (*Daily Telegraph*, May 26, 1939) which is a very effective answer to Sir John Anderson's " experts " who state (*inter alia*) that Finsbury shelters of similar size are dangerous because the people could not reach them in time. Yet Finsbury can at least be certain of a longer warning time than Gibraltar, which is right on the coast, and has a hostile hinterland.

What then would be the effect of proper shelters upon the casualty figures ? Let us again quote from the address of Mr. Oliver Simmonds, M.P., mentioned previously. He states :

> A careful examination of the statistics of raids on Barcelona and Tarragona up to February 5, 1938, gives 18 persons killed per ton of bombs. Subsequent to this, and for the three months of March, May and June, 1938, when shelters were widely available the following figures are given :
>
> March .. 6 killed per ton.
> May .. 3 killed per ton.
> June .. 1 killed per ton.

The Government has now categorically refused to sanction heavily armoured communal bomb-proof shelters, but in view of the above facts, what can be their motive in refusing ? The blunt truth is that the Government does not care a toss about saving the lives of the people. Sir John Anderson has said so in so many words :

> So long as people regard the chief end of Civil Defence to be personal safety, there can be no solution to our problems. . . . I deplore that the emphasis should be so insistent upon mere safety. (Interview in *Picture Post*, March 18, 1939).

What, then, really lies behind the Government scheme ? The ruling class appreciate that if there is a war, industry must be kept going. Furthermore they see as their most feared enemy the working class, which, in the present phase of history, implies also the whole democratic movement. All the preparations are consequently directed both towards enabling essential factories to continue production and towards strengthening the grip of the ruling class on the state machine.

Hence the new proposals for bomb proof shelters for key industrial workers. Hence the Anderson shelters and the rest of the paraphernalia because, in the words of the officially adopted Hailey report, " there is clearly some stage at which casualties (among civilians) will cause demoralisation and impairment of effort." Hence the evacuation scheme, which relieves the industrial areas of the embarrassment of " non-essential " people, but which makes no provision for the safety of these evacuated " non-essentials." Hence also the setting up of machinery intended to enable the sweeping away of all forms of democratic government, and the substitution of naked class rule.

Most people are familiar with the outlines of the so-called " 12 Dictators " scheme, but it is much more menacing than at first appears. The country has been divided into regions to each of which a Regional Commissioner has been appointed. Each of the Ministries (Health,

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Transport, Labour, etc.) is to have a headquarters in each region, and the Regional Commissioner is in peace time to establish touch with the machinery of the Local Authorities by means of a Regional Council having advisory, not executive powers, and composed of representatives of the Local Authorities in the area. Machinery is to be established so that " if communications break down " the Regional Commissioner can take complete control of the region, the Ministries' regional offices and the local authorities taking their orders from him. Speaking of the local authorities, Sir John Anderson stated :

> It must be perfectly clear that elected local bodies as they function in peace time may not constitute the most effective type of organisation that could be imagined for war conditions. (House of Commons, March 1, 1939).

Reading between the lines it is apparent that, once the machinery has been set up, the Regional Commissioner can take complete control (and this applies not only to A.R.P.) at any time, whether communications have broken down or not, always provided that he is not confronted with a vigilant, self-reliant, democratic movement.

This latter point links up with a further aspect. It will be readily admitted by anyone with a knowledge of local government administration, that a local authority attempting to carry out all the Civil Defence duties which the Government is imposing on it, is faced with a task of extraordinary magnitude and complexity which is further complicated by the unhelpful attitude of the Government. Now from the Government's point of view there is a certain advantage in placing the Local Authorities in a state of administrative confusion and despair for they will then be less antagonistic to the suggestion of handing over the control to any regular or irregular body that appears on the horizon. It is worth noting that just this manœuvre was partially responsible for the decision of the Metropolitan Boroughs Standing Joint Committee to request that control of wardens be handed over to the police. This is not, of course, to say that all the inefficiency is intentional.

In the light of all this what must be the line of action for the working class movement ? The objective is clear. We are for the best practicable means of protection in all its forms for two reasons. Firstly, because the lives of workers and democratic peoples must not be needlessly sacrificed. Secondly, because it is one of the necessary steps in a process of strengthening the democracies to resist and defeat fascist aggression with the least possible slaughter and misery should war come.

The first step in the struggle must be a realisation that nothing can be accomplished without a huge mass movement for effective protection and for the retention and extension of democratic control. Let us be quite clear that on the issue of planned effective protection versus unplanned pretence of protection we can rally the people in a manner which can force the Government either to make weakening concessions or to expose itself as the open enemy of the people and to take the consequences.

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The local councils have an extraordinarily important part to play, and they must be convinced that the people look to them to fight for effective protection backed up by the organised strength of the mass movement, between which and the Councils the closest links must be forged. Petitions, referenda, deputations, representation on the A.R.P. Committees, official Council Speakers to representative meetings, all these and other appropriate means must be used to assure that the wishes and strength of the popular movement are translated into action by the Councils. At the same time the Councils must retain and strengthen their control of A.R.P. both through the Regional scheme and otherwise.

Already a large number of Councils have proposed specific schemes for heavily armoured shelters. During this year for instance the following have proposed such schemes, and this is by no means an exhaustive list: Finsbury, Paddington, Lambeth, Hampstead, Stoke Newington, Birmingham, West Riding, Brighton, Ramsgate, Newcastle, Sunderland, Barnsley, Manchester and Stockport. Furthermore Councils throughout the country have vehemently protested to the Government on various aspects of the official scheme, and in some cases have met together specially to present a joint case. This has been so particularly in relation to the classifying of certain large towns (Scunthorpe for instance), as reception areas, and the amendments which the Government have recently made to their zoning have been the direct results of this movement of protest.

A further necessity in the fight for democracy is the widest participation of members of the working class and democrats generally in all the volunteer A.R.P. services. A volunteer service that is with the people in their demand for effective protection and containing numbers of those who appreciate the value of collective action, can play a big part in raising the general level of the mass movement and in assuring resistance to the Government's anti-democracy drive, while at the same time there lie in such services as the wardens' possibilities for real leadership, for the warden is the man to whom all his neighbours will look for a lead. It cannot be denied that at present the working class gravely mistrusts the A.R.P. services, and there is no wide participation. It is one of our tasks to remedy this position and to get a real understanding of what is involved.

Let it be again reiterated that on this issue of A.R.P. there are all the prerequisites for a nation-wide mass movement against the Government, and that if the potential forces are brought into action, not only can the Government's whole scheme be swept aside and replaced by a scheme for real protection, but forces will be set into motion which can throw all Great Britain's strength and resources over to the side of Peace.

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The Heritage of the French Revolution

BY WALTER CRAMER

WE ARE LIVING to-day in the crumbling world of capitalism—we see before our eyes the blackest side of this system gaining the upper hand more and more, while all that we value in it, all that enriched human society, is being rapidly destroyed. War and poverty, the destruction of cultural values and political liberty—they are the order of the day. Humanity is suffering for what it is losing. Man's heart and mind, unless they are dumb and dead and have lost all urge to action, dwell on the past or on the future, they are filled with desires, with hopes and ideals which are but scantily realised at present. We socialists know that the future is in our hands, that ours is the only way for mankind to build a life where man will be master of his own fate. We know that our road is the right road, not because we have more imagination than others and can picture the future more concretely, but because we are aware that existing society has produced all that is necessary to build the future. We know that the only way to preserve and develop the valuable contributions of capitalism is to take the existing social production of all means of subsistence out of the hands of private owners and place it in those of society as a whole. " Communism," says Marx, " is for us not a stable state which is to be established, an *ideal* to which reality will have to adjust itself. We call communism the *real* movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the premises now in existence." (*German Ideology*, p. 26).

The premises now in existence—man can never build his own future without building on those premises. And the workers, who are the leaders in this struggle for the future, have to build upon the achievements of the bourgeois epoch of history. *The heritage of the French Revolution is the foundation for this struggle for our future.*

The crisis of capitalism has found its political expression in the establishment of fascism. Fascism suppresses not only the socialist movement, which aims at destroying capitalism and supplanting it by a new form of society. Fascism also destroys all the most valuable creations of capitalism itself. The eyes of socialists are therefore more than ever directed towards the positive, creative, revolutionary aspects of capitalist civilisation. These were brought out most clearly in the course of the French Revolution. The French Revolution sets us the example of a great revolution and it can help us to solve some of the problems of the present.

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The French Revolution was a bourgeois revolution, led by and made in the interest of the middle class. But the bourgeoisie was able to mobilise the whole " nation " against the Old Order. It was this which ensured the victory of the revolution : the bourgeoisie simultaneously mobilised all the revolutionary forces and instilled into them the conviction that everybody who was not on the side of the revolution had no right to exist, was in fact excluded from the nation.

This new conception of the nation was of the greatest importance for the progress of the French Revolution and has not even lost its revolutionary significance to-day. In his famous pamphlet entitled *What is the Third Estate?*, the Abbé Sieyès stated clearly that only those classes performing a vital function in society can be regarded as part of the nation, whereas all privileged and parasitic classes, that is to say the leading groups of the two other " estates," the aristocracy and the clergy, though they may speak the same language as the rest of the population, do not belong to the nation :

> Who would dare to maintain that the third estate does not possess all that is necessary to form a complete nation ? It is a strong and robust man, whose one arm is still in chains. If the privileged order were removed, the nation would not be something less, but something more. So what is the third estate ? Everything, but an everything which is fettered and oppressed. What would it be without the privileged order ? Everything, but an everything which is free and prospering. Nothing can go on without it, everything would go much better without the others. . . . The third estate consequently embraces everybody who belongs to the nation; and everybody who does not belong to the third estate cannot regard himself as belonging to the nation.

This is a truly revolutionary conception, for while it ostracises the ruling class, declares it to be a worse than useless section of society which has got to go, it regards the suppressed classes as a unity, proud of themselves and claiming the sole right to live. The bourgeoisie consciously and unconsciously ignored all class distinctions within the the " third estate," it claimed to be the sole possible representative of the entire " productive " people, including the workers and the poor farmers. There was a justification for disregarding the class distinctions within the third estate as long as the main revolutionary struggle had to be directed against feudalism and its political exponents. At a later time, when the Revolution had secured the fundamental aims of the bourgeoisie, it became the primary aim of the bourgeoisie to keep down the workers and the petty bourgeoisie in order to safeguard its own rule; the meaning of the term nation was thus imperceptibly changed. On the assumption that the establishment of a bourgeois state excluded the possibility of further class divisions within society, the nation now came to embrace all people living on a common territory or speaking the same language.* The struggle of the nation

*It is significant that the bourgeoisie has never found a generally accepted and consistent definition of the nation. By leaving it vague it could be used in varying ways, whichever fitted best into the plans of the bourgeoisie. See on the other hand Stalin's precise definition of the nation.

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consequently became exclusively an external struggle either against political oppressors, such as the Habsburg, the Tsarist, or the British Empire, or for imperialist expansion. To fight for the nation had meant, at the time of the French Revolution, to fight against the ruling class; but now it meant the contrary, the suppression of all strife between the classes, the maintenance of " the unity of the nation."

To-day, however, owing to the bitter determination of the bourgeoisie to preserve the old order, even to the extent of betraying its own nation rather than fight against fascism and owing to the destructive character of fascism itself—to-day, the old revolutionary conception of the nation has come to life again. To-day only the working people fight for the preservation of the life and independence of the nation. Whereas the rulers of capitalist states ruin the life of the people and are willing to deliver them rather into the hands of a foreign conqueror than permit their social liberation.

The nationalism of the French Revolution was a revolutionary nationalism which at first was in harmony with an *international* movement of *all* oppressed peoples. But this internationalism was a bourgeois internationalism, based upon the temporary community of antagonism against the Power fighting for the preservation of the Old Order. Fundamentally it was an exclusive nationalism, which could break its alliance with other peoples as quickly as it formed it and was able easily to switch over from a struggle for the brotherhood of mankind to the Napoleonic struggle of French imperialism.

The present revolutionary nationalism is an essential part of the international solidarity of the working class, which is founded upon an inevitable and permanent community of interest of the workers of all lands, irrespective of whether they are still oppressed or have already liberated themselves in a revolution. This nationalism also fights for the liberty and individuality of each nation as part of the struggle for the liberation of mankind, but it cannot lead to a national imperialism. For socialism implies the free collaboration in the productive process of all members of society—" a nation which suppresses others cannot be free " (Marx)—and any domination of one country by another would consequently destroy the basis of socialism. The non-imperialistic character of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union is therefore not accidental but follows from the character of its social system.

This revolutionary conception has already assumed immense practical importance. The Austrian nation was defended not by Seyss-Inquhardt or even Schuschnigg, but by the workers calling for arms. In Czechoslovakia the Communist Party called for the defence of the nation, while the Agrarians sabotaged it and betrayed the country to Hitler. And it is certainly not Hitler who fights in the interests of the German nation; Hitler, who drives it into imperialist wars, ruthlessly uses up the country's reserves of raw materials and man-power for the production of armaments and who destroys its liberty and culture—

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but the working people who fight for peace, bread and freedom. And it is not Chamberlain and the class he represents who defend Britain, but those who demand a policy of collective security and improved conditions for the people.

The French Revolution powerfully proclaimed to the world that *the nation must be free.* But did this only mean freedom from foreign oppression ? " If we wish to be free," replied one of the pamphleteers, " all Frenchmen must be free so that our liberty will be safeguarded by all." And the leaders of the Revolution stated in the famous *Declaration of the Rights of Man:*

> The nation is essentially the source of all sovereignty; nor can any individual or any body of men be entitled to any authority which is not expressly derived from it.

The nation is the source of all authority and it has consequently not fully liberated itself, unless it is represented in a legislature through which it exercises that authority. It is one of the fundamental principles proclaimed by the French Revolution that *democracy is an essential element of national freedom.*

This principle remained of lasting revolutionary importance. The bourgeoisie was never able to digest completely what it had proclaimed in a moment of stress. For it was only the stress of the moment which induced it to call upon the masses to fight against the Old Order in the name of the " Rights of Man." Complete democracy, complete political equality always constituted a profound danger to the middle class. As the interests of the majority are bound in the long run to clash with the interests of this class, democracy can become an instrument worked against the interest of the middle class if the whole people takes full advantage of its political rights. In this case the bourgeoisie has to rely upon its other pillars of power, its control of the economic system, and of " public opinion," its key positions in the civil service and the armed forces. These pillars have often proved strong enough to withstand the full utilisation of democratic rights. But the fact that the middle class is driven to rely on them rather than on political democracy, so solemnly proclaimed by the French Revolution, is already a sign of great weakness.

The danger inherent in the proclamation of the Rights of Man was already foreseen at the time. Malonet, Member of the National Assembly, gave the following warning on August 1, 1789, before the declaration had even been issued :

> American society, which has been newly formed, consists exclusively of proprietors who have already accustomed themselves to a state of equality, which knows neither luxury nor poverty. . . . But we, gentlemen, we have as fellow-citizens an immense number of men without property . . . .who are sometimes, and not without justified motives, irritated by the spectacle of wealth and luxury. . . . I believe, gentlemen, that it is necessary in a great empire for those who are in a dependent situation to see rather the proper limits than the extension of natural liberty.

The fear that the workers may not have regard to the " proper

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limits " of liberty has been ever present among the bourgeoisie, because at a moment when it needed the masses to fight its battle, it had seen itself compelled to pronounce this dangerous principle of universal democracy.

In a period of social stabilisation the existence of wide democratic rights does not constitute an acute danger for the bourgeoisie, on the contrary it helps to delude the workers that real freedom is within their reach under capitalism. But to-day it is more than ever necessary for us to remember this truly revolutionary conception of a democratic nation. By seizing upon the tradition of the French Revolution we shall attach to the working class movement, mobilise against fascism and its friends, those large sections of the population into whom the tradition of the French Revolution has sunk deeply, consciously or unconsciously.

We thus have to state clearly : A nation cannot be free unless it is master of its own fate; fascism cannot free a nation, because under fascism a nation has no freedom of self-government; and the best defence of Britain or any other nation lies not in the subordination to a dictatorial government, to " emergency measures," introduced by the capitalist government in the " national interest," but in the greatest possible freedom for the people, and the suppression of all agents of the " privileged " classes who are the real enemies of the nation.

The French Revolution ensured the unity of the revolutionary forces by raising the banner of the democratic nation against the privileged classes. Important though this political ideology was, the bourgeoisie knew very well the primary mobilising force of *material* demands; it therefore took very great interest in *the material demands of the suppressed classes of the French population*, especially the peasantry. In the same way as the bolsheviks sent out workers to organise the peasants in villages, members of the French bourgeoisie toured the countryside during the campaign for the formulation of the demands of the people, which were to be submitted to the King in the famous " cahiers de doléances," the " books of grievances." All over the country lawyers and other members of the middle class helped the peasants in formulating and writing down their demands. Thereby the simultaneous character of the movement throughout the country was ensured and individual grievances were raised to the level of demands of national importance.

Middle class and peasantry were united in that they were both opponents of the feudal form of property, whilst defending their own *rights of property*. Convinced of its revolutionary justification the bourgeoisie declared that the bourgeois form of property was the only form of property that had a right of existence, in the same way as it boldly declared that the third estate was in fact equivalent to the entire nation. That this declaration needed a capable defence was brought to their mind particularly by the fact that the opponents of the revolution also fought in the name of the preservation of *all* rights of property. The bourgeoisie was well aware that the progress of the

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productive system demanded an adjustment of old categories. It was the aim of the bourgeoisie and the peasantry to abolish the property right of the big feudal landlords and the church over the land of the peasantry and all rights of exacting feudal dues arising therefrom and they demanded the suppression of all property rights in offices of state and other rights arising from aristocratic privileges. But at the same time they proclaimed the sacredness of their own form of property. Bourgeois property had to be protected against arbitrary confiscation by the crown and the nobility, as well as against exclusive taxation; it was to be declared sacred and inviolable, at the same time that the aristocracy and the church was expropriated.

The Third Estate of the suburbs of Paris defined, therefore, the difference between bourgeois property and antiquated forms of property in these words :

> That all rights which never could be property, because they constitute a perpetual violation of the natural right, should be suppressed, as well as those rights which, though in principle they constitute property, ceased to do so, because the original cause to which they were linked does not exist any more.

By introducing the qualifications of " natural right," natural, of course, in the eyes of a capitalist or peasant proprietor, and the historical justification of property, the bourgeoisie turned the tables against the aristocracy. Taking for granted its own definition, as being the only one that had a justification of existence, it proclaimed in the Rights of Man :

> As property is an inviolable and sacred right, nobody may be deprived of it, unless public necessity which has been legally proved, obviously demands it, and on condition that a just and previously fixed indemnity is given.

On the basis of a conception of property which united the interests of the middle class in the towns and those of the peasantry, while setting them clearly against the interests of the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie proclaimed the sacredness of property.

But what has happened to this sacredness of property during the period that the bourgeoisie directed the fate of society ? No class has ever destroyed as ruthlessly and sweepingly the rights and security of property as the bourgeoisie, and this process has assumed rapidly increasing proportions since the growth of monopoly capitalism. Under the rule of monopoly-capitalism, especially under the impact of the fascist state, it is not only the artisan, the small farmer and the small trader who are deprived of their property. Bigger and bigger industrial and commercial units are swallowed up by big monopoly combines which are helped effectively by the power of the state. The insecurity of property is one of the most dominant features of the present capitalist society.

The right of property, so loudly proclaimed by the French Revolution, is defended not by the bourgeoisie, but by the workers, paradoxical

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though this may appear. The property right of modern masters of industry has lost its productive nature, it is in fact a title, conferring the right to draw profits, but it relates to a unit of production which is worked by individual collaboration. And like the owners of feudal property before the French Revolution, monopoly capital to-day uses the power of the state for its own domination. In fact, we can declare again, in the words of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, that " the original cause to which they (the rights of property) were linked does not exist any more."

Those rights of property which are still linked to individual productivity can to-day be defended only by the People's Front movement, which alone can save the lower middle class from ruin and ensure it an effective share in directing its own fate and that of society as a whole.

Based upon the sacredness of individual property was *the liberty of the individual*, that great principle, announced in the first article of the Declaration of the Rights of Man :

> Men are born, and always continue, free and equal in respect of their rights; social distinctions can be based only on the common weal.

It was a proud and revolutionary deed to declare the liberty of the individual to be the basic element of society, though we know to-day that true freedom exists only where there is social as well as political freedom, where the common ownership of the means of production is established and where individual freedom is an essential part of, and not opposed to, the freedom of society as a whole. The extreme individualism, which assumes that what benefits the individual necessarily also benefits society as a whole, is typical of the big bourgeoisie. Nevertheless we appreciate more than ever to-day the value of the political value of the individual, proclaimed by the Revolution.

The French Revolution, though a bourgeois revolution, was, however, the work of the masses, who were primarily of a petty bourgeois character, small traders, artisans, small farmers. The theories and practice of the revolution were consequently also partly those of the petty bourgeoisie, who were well aware that the individual interest of the big industrialist or banker might not coincide with that of the small man. Therefore he regarded a curtailment of individual freedom as desirable, if this was necessary in the interest of the " common weal."

The principal exponent of the over-riding importance of the interests of society was Rousseau. In his *Social Contract* he stated that the fundamental problem was

> to find a form of association which defends and protects with all its common force the person and the possessions of each associate, and in which everybody, whilst uniting with all, nevertheless obeys himself alone, and remains as free as he was before.

In a bourgeois society this is certainly an insoluble problem. Rousseau tried to solve it by introducing the " general will," which

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is in fact the presumed common interest, and maintaining that " whoever refuses to obey the general will, will be compelled to do so by the whole body of society. . . . *He will be forced to be free.*"

The conception of the primary importance of individual liberty and Rousseau's view of the overriding importance of the general will shared, however, the bourgeois fallacy that all classes could, over a long period, have the same interest. That there existed vital differences of opinion as to what constitutes the common interest, differences which are conditioned by different class points of view, is already apparent from the fact that the French Revolution produced various theories about the place and importance of individual liberty. And how much the social interests and ideologies of the revolution conflicted among themselves, was apparent in its bloody strife. Rousseau's ideas became the ideological justification for the " Terror " of 1793, the climax of the revolution. In order to meet the increasing foreign intervention and the sabotage of the war by the large fifth column in France, the revolutionary masses used the terror against the enemies of the revolution; the state infringed upon the rights and liberty of the individual in the interest of maintaining the revolution as a whole. Yet when this had been achieved, the revolutionary dictatorship of the petty bourgeois people was replaced by the " directorium " of the big bourgeoisie, which established its own conception of individual freedom —which meant in fact freedom for the rich !

The same conflict has lived on ever since in the tradition of the revolution and when we seize to-day upon its heritage we have to have regard to its two aspects : on the one hand the demand for unrestricted personal liberty (subject only to the vague limitation : " Do not wrong anybody else ! ") on the other hand a personal liberty which must be co-ordinated with and is subject to the common weal. Under capitalism these two conceptions could never be reconciled and formed the ideological bases for its varying régimes (including fascism, with its demagogic slogan : the common weal goes before the private weal). But the *socialist movement* can incorporate both, for it *established, on the basis of reality, a harmony between the interests of all working people,* and between those of the individual and of society as a whole. The interests of the working class, leading towards the establishment of socialism, coincide to-day with those of all other oppressed classes. To-day we are therefore justified in speaking of the " common weal " of the working people. And this common weal is in no way opposed to the interests and the freedom of the individuals belonging to the oppressed classes. On the contrary, the working people have to-day to defend personal liberty, against the bourgeoisie. For there is neither personal nor collective freedom under fascism. There is no freedom before the law in a state which deprives the working people of their political rights and persecutes the Jews. We have to restrict the freedom of the present rulers, but we defend and extend that of the majority of

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the population. The defence of individual liberty has become an essential part of the fight for social freedom—and both derive great strength from the tradition of the French Revolution.

It is therefore not with their " tongues in their cheek," of which they are so often accused, that Communists fight for personal liberty and individual property, for democracy and the freedom of the nation. Socialism will be able to fulfil those age-long desires of mankind.

The unity of the movement of all working people is based indeed on their real and permanent community of interest, but to bring this home to them, we need political conceptions too. And in their formulation and application we can learn *important lessons from the ideological preparation of the French Revolution.* Though it is certainly not true, as bourgeois historians so frequently maintain, that the philosophers caused the French Revolution, their theoretical work, which was later popularised and put into a more directly political-revolutionary form by numerous pamphleteers, was of decisive importance. Only those slogans, based upon a searching analysis of conditions, which gave concrete expression to the demands of the revolutionary classes, were able to mobilise simultaneously all classes opposed to the existing political régime and weld them into a united movement clearly recognising its opponent. The revolutionaries of France proved by the way they utilised and applied the ideas of the eighteenth century philosophers that there can be " no revolutionary practice without a revolutionary theory."

In this sense the conception of the productive and self-governing nation, the bourgeois conception of the right of property, the clear designation of the " privileged orders " as the enemies of the people—they were all of the greatest importance. To find a similar platform that will unite and mobilise all forces opposed to fascism and the rule of monopoly capitalism is to-day of equal importance. Marxism has achieved that theoretical clarification which is essential for a revolutionary movement. It has clearly shown the class antagonism in capitalism and has clearly analysed its economic process and its inherent contradictions, which will lead to its breakdown. This very breakdown has, however, to-day led to a state when on the one hand the opponents of socialism are more determined and ruthless than ever and on the other hand many social classes, other than the working class, see the ground crumbling under their feet and are willing actively to oppose the forces of destruction. The spearhead of the struggle remains as before the working class. Only the workers can have the determination and unity necessary to lead a revolution; but their alliance with the petty bourgeoisie in town and country and with the intellectuals has assumed greater importance than ever. In this situation we have to find new slogans which not only set the workers against the capitalists, but the " people's front " against the " 200 families." To-day the tradition of the French Revolution has acquired fresh and immediate importance.

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In our political movement, the strategy of which is based upon a marxist analysis of conditions, we bring the ideas of the French Revolution, which have so deeply sunk into people's minds, to new life. The enemy to-day is no longer a feudal aristocracy protected by legal privileges; to-day the nation is oppressed by the big capitalists, who aim at the destruction of democracy. But the demands of 1789 are still of revolutionary importance if we emphasise the historic continuity between the bourgeois conceptions of the French Revolution and the proletarian aims of the socialist movement.

To-day the working class is the leader in the struggle for the independence and freedom of the nation. This freedom can only be safeguarded, if the nation is really free, that is to say under a régime of complete democratic self-government. In this struggle for a free nation the working class must ally itself with all the other oppressed classes, take up their interests as thoroughly as did the French bourgeoisie. The workers are the sole defenders of personal property to-day, in the sense in which it was proclaimed by the French Revolution—property which finds justification in individual productivity. This property is attacked to-day by monopoly capital and so is the right of personal freedom which the bourgeoisie based upon it. To-day the workers are the only defenders of personal and social freedom. Every extension of personal freedom is an essential part of the struggle for social freedom under socialism.

Socialism aims at a higher freedom, but it saves all that is valuable of the former era. With pride a socialist can therefore take up the proclamation of the " Rights of Man " :

> The natural and imprescriptable rights of man are Liberty, Property, Security, and Resistance to Oppression.

We cherish the heritage of the French Revolution. And we do not cherish it in the way one cherishes a family relic. We regard the tradition of the French Revolution as a potent weapon in the present revolutionary struggle, for it links the traditions and memories of the capitalist age, so deeply rooted in everyone, to the struggle for a new age; it enables us to fight against the brutalities of declining capitalism with weapons which were welded by the greatest revolution capitalist society has produced, the French Revolution !

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CONTROVERSY

Economic Crisis & Armaments —a Reply to Emile Burns

EVERY MARXIST WILL be glad that Emile Burns has started a Marxist discussion on the most important problem of the effects of armament economy upon the crisis in Fascist countries and of armament production on the crisis in Great Britain.

It is desirable at the outset to clear away a misconception. The title of Emile Burns' article, *The Causes of Crisis*, is not actually related to the subject of my articles: he wants to deal with the causes of crises while I deal only with the chief features of an economy menaced by an over-production crisis (expressly making the distinction between causes and chief features, p. 291). While it is most important and timely to deal with the causes of crisis the restricted space at my disposal made it impossible to deal with all the subjects I wanted to in connection with the problems I raised, and thus I confined myself to studying the peculiar features of the crisis under peculiar conditions (German Fascism, and British finance capitalism under conditions of rapidly progressing armament production).

After having made the incorrect statement that I interpret Stalin in his famous speech on the over-production crisis as referring solely to over-production of armaments, Emile Burns finds fault with my conception of the purchasing power of capitalists. " The whole conception of ' purchasing power ' as something common to capitalists, the State, and the workers, is used by bourgeois economists to gloss over the difference between the capitalists and the workers," says Emile Burns. But if he looks up *Capital*, Vol. II, Chapter 21, or Marx's letter to Engels, dated London, July 6, 1863, he will find that Marx explains in great detail how the sale of means of production is dependent upon purchases by users of means of production (producers, that is, of production goods and of consumption goods). I cannot understand why Emile Burns criticises the conception of over-production of means of production as well as of means of consumption; it is a Marxist conception; and if he accepts this conception, then he must accept the conception of a growing purchasing power of capitalists on the market where means of production are sold, though the growth of production of these goods is even faster than the growth of purchasing power.

Emile Burns is, of course, right in claiming with Marx that the final cause of all crisis is the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses because if there were no poverty and no restricted consumption of the masses then production and sale of consumption goods would be unlimited, and then, of course, there could be no over-production of means of production. There is, therefore, not the slightest contradiction between what I have said and what Marx says. I did not deal at all with the ultimate causes of the crisis which are the same, of course, under any kind of capitalist government, but exclusively with the specific features of a crisis under present conditions, mentioning general features of all crises only when necessary to explain certain peculiar features.

As to the peculiar features of the crisis in a Fascist State and as to the

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reasons why there can be and must be an over-production crisis also in armament production I explained that there is also a limit to the purchasing power of the State and that, if the limits of this purchasing power are exceeded, there must be an over-production crisis of armaments.

Emile Burns says: "There is no economic limit to the 'purchasing power' of the State. . . . That is why during a war State orders can expand indefinitely without arousing resistance from the general body of capitalists, so long as the money required is raised by loans from them, inflation, and taxing the workers. The workers may revolt, as in Russia in 1917 and Germany in 1918; but there is nothing that can be called a crisis of over-production resulting from the lack of purchasing power by the State."

If Emile Burns had glanced only very slightly at my first article he would have seen that I deal extensively with the problem of war and crisis and that I say explicitly: "There is no doubt that during a war over-production cannot break out." (p. 291). But this has nothing to do with the problem of over-production in an armament economy before the outbreak of war. This really is the new problem put to us all by Stalin's speech. And while Emile Burns seems to give the answer that there can be no over-production of armaments in peace time, and that there can be no over-production crisis in the armament industry in a Fascist State because the State can always start an inflation to pay for the armaments, I contend that the use of inflation in order to pay for the armaments is nothing but the peculiar expression of the over-production crisis in the armament industry (which coincides with the over-production crisis in the industries producing means of production and consumption goods: the over-production crisis being always a general one, we have singled out for special study the crisis in the armament industries because of its particular features and problems).

The dissension between Emile Burns and myself, therefore, boils down to the question: will the over-production crisis in Germany, of which Stalin speaks, be restricted to the production of means of production and consumption goods, or will the armament goods be included, and if the latter is the case, as I contend, is inflation a peculiar expression of the over-production crisis or is inflation in a capitalist State possible without crisis as Emile Burns seems to believe? I think a perusal of our literature during the first post-war years—and by our literature I mean the whole of the Marxist literature—will show Emile Burns that inflation in peace time can be the particular form of the over-production crisis.

Emile Burns quite rightly says that war economy according to the speech of Stalin means a certain postponement of the outbreak of the crisis, and again in my article I have not only not forgotten this statement but have expressly tried to explain why this is the case. But while war economy postpones the crisis, it also can and must deepen the crisis when it comes.

As to the special features of the development of the crisis in Great Britain under present conditions I gave only some indications in the first of the two articles, and as far as the second article is concerned I have the impression that Emile Burns has no serious objections to it. The problem of the crisis and armament production under a People's Government should undoubtedly be dealt with much more thoroughly than it was in the few lines I gave to it, and the few lines which Emile Burns wrote on this problem should be expanded into a long article before a discussion in the LABOUR MONTHLY can take place.

But the last few sentences of Emile Burns article require a definite answer. He expresses the opinion: "It seems to me clear that further study of the economic position, both in fascist countries and in Britain, must have as its basis the developing crisis of over-production in the civilian market; the

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effect of armament orders must be seen against this background . . . but it is not a new type of crisis that is developing."

As far as Great Britain is concerned I entirely agree with him. But I think Emile Burns is wrong as far as the Fascist States are concerned. For Great Britain is a country producing more and more armaments while Germany, for example, is a country which not only produces more and more armaments but has transferred its economy into a war economy, and it is wrong to regard the war goods production in a war economy as something of minor importance as compared with civilian production. As to the question whether a new type of crisis is developing, the situation is as follows : the crisis which is developing is an over-production crisis such as is peculiar to every industrial capitalist society. But it has certain features which are new, just as Fascist Germany is a capitalist country, but capitalism there has certain features which are new. Whether we use the term " new type " or " new features " is immaterial as long as we realise that they are capitalist in character.

JOHN KNIGHT.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

Our Last Number. (Fact.) 6d. 98 pp.

Glimpses of World History. Jawaharlal Nehru. (Lindsay Drummond.) 10s. 6d. 993 pp.

Monetary Equilibrium. Gunnar Myrdal. (William Hodge.) 12s. 6d. 214 pp.

National Unity for World Leadership. James Ashton. (Alden Press.) 6d. 31 pp.

The Politics of the Balkans. Joseph S. Roucek. (McGraw-Hill.) 8s. 6d. 168 pp.

Organised Labour in Four Continents. H. A. Marquand and Others. (Longmans.) 15s. 518 pp.

Jesus the Heretic. Conrad Noel. (Dent.) 5s. 222 pp.

Truth and Mr. Chamberlain. Steven MacGregor. *The Three Cows.* Egon Erwin Kisch. Key Books, Nos. 7 and 8. (Fore Publications.) 2d. each 64 pp.

Karl Marx. Franz Mehring. (Allen and Unwin.) 7s. 6d. 755 pp.

An Outline of Man's History. Patrick Gordon Walker. (N.C.L.C.) 2s. 6d. 276 pp.

Crossing the Rubicon. F. N. Keen. (Cornish.) 1s. 6d. 60 pp.

The Corporate State in Action. Carl T. Schmidt. (Gollancz.) 4s. 6d. 221 pp.

Heredity, Eugenics and Social Progress. H. C. Bibby. (Gollancz.) 1s. 6d. 93 pp.

Tory M.P. Simon Haxey. (Gollancz.) 7s. 6d. 263 pp.

The Defence of Britain. Liddell Hart. (Faber and Faber.) 12s. 6d. 444 pp.

The People's War. I. Epstein. (Gollancz.) 7s. 6d. 384 pp.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Marxism and Science

Modern Science by Hyman Levy. (Hamish Hamilton. 21s.).
The Crisis in Physics by Christopher Caudwell. (John Lane. 7s. 6d.).

MARXISM, IF OFTEN in a rather diluted form, is spreading very rapidly among scientific workers to-day. Most atomic physicists find themselves compelled to adopt some at least of the principles of dialectical materialism if they are to avoid idealism. For it is now useless to pretend that electrons behave as particles should do according to any modification of Newtonian mechanics. On the other hand such students of scientific history as Hogben have largely accepted the outlook of historical materialism while disowning the dialectical method.

Professor Levy, though he does not mention the names of Marx, Engels, or Lenin, makes a systematic attempt in this book to apply Marxism to physics and mathematics. There are also briefer references to astronomy, geology and chemistry. The historical side is relatively briefly though very well treated, and the main effort is devoted to expounding mathematics and physics as they are. The author has been conspicuously successful in showing how the principle of the transformation of quantity into quality permeates physics. And this is the more important because in the ordinary teaching of that subject emphasis is placed on phases of stability rather than on qualitative leaps. Thus we can give a satisfactory account of the bending of a metal rod under pressure, and of the movement of the parts after it breaks, but not of the process of breaking. Professor Levy applies this principle to the problems of aeroplane design in an extraordinarily interesting chapter.

He is perhaps less happy in the chapter called " The Unity of Opposites." It may be correct to regard space and time, matter and energy, as opposites, but there is no suggestion that their union gives rise to a struggle of opposite tendencies, and thus to a process of development. This principle is brought out more clearly in the discussion of aeroplane design. Aeroplanes have developed because they had to combine strength and lightness, stability and ease of manœuvre, and so on. In fact physics is perhaps not so well suited as engineering or biology for illustrating " the struggle of opposites " as an evolutionary principle. Professor Levy gives numerous examples of qualitative leaps, but does not generally attribute them to this cause.

His conception of an " isolate," that is to say a part of the universe considered in isolation from the rest, and therefore incapable of complete description, which he developed as a scientific principle in *The Universe of Science*, plays a less important part in this book, although it is still stressed. On the other hand some of the ideas developed in *A Philosophy for a Modern Man*, which met with a good deal of criticism from Marxists, are here dropped or at least not over-emphasised.

Like the authors of the brilliant sketch of dialectical materialism in Chapter IV of the History of the C.P.S.U. (B), Professor Levy does not mention the negation of negations. In fact this principle is rather rarely exemplified in physics, though it comes into its own in biology, and may yet do so in physics when we understand more about the detail of sudden changes in molecules and atoms.

Modern Science can be recommended as a real contribution to the Marxist

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interpretation of science. Every Marxist student of elementary mathematics and physics should read it, and other Marxists can do so without requiring a very extensive preliminary knowledge of science. Finally it should serve to spread a knowledge of some of the principles of Marxism in scientific circles.

There are far too many misprints. One does not need the help of Freud to guess that " wage-length " for " wave-length " is a sign of the author's interest in economics; but others, including one of simple arithmetic on page 241, are less excusable, and will " give occasion to the enemy to blaspheme."

Christopher Caudwell's book, though much shorter, is far more ambitious. No one who has read *Illusion and Reality* can doubt that he was one of the very ablest men of his generation. In twelve chapters he tried to apply Marxism in detail to the critical problems of modern physics, which have given rise to relativity and the quantum theory. Professor Levy deals with them in no great detail, and his chapters on relativity do not consider some of the most interesting (and dialectical) of modern developments.

The first six of Caudwell's chapters were complete when he went to his death in Spain, but the last six are based on rough notes, and with a perhaps exaggerated piety, Professor Levy, who deserves our hearty thanks for editing the book, has left a number of obvious misprints (e.g., " existed " for " enisled " in the quotation from Arnold on page 176) which might at least have been corrected in footnotes.

Caudwell attempts to explain physical theories as the shadows of economic realities. Particles represent the individuals in a bourgeois society; the field of gravitation, electromagnetic forces, and so on, being the image of the market which determines their fate. On the whole this analysis is brilliantly successful. But we must remember that Caudwell was a poet, and wrote as a poet. Hence we must pardon him such phrases as " the whole consciousness of society gathers at the pole of the owning class." I think that if he had returned from Spain he would have deleted that sentence. I have heard a better discussion of problems of pure science in the trenches above the Jarama than any which I can remember among officers mainly drawn from the owning class in 1914-1918. Even in the ancient world the few scraps of proletarian writing which have come down to us, such as the first three gospels, are far above the average quality of the literature written by slave-owners.

But the attempt to build up a philosophy which will explain the antinomies of modern physics, especially in the uncompleted chapters 7-10, is not in my opinion so successful. I intend to read them again several times, because they include ideas which may be of extraordinary importance, but parts of Chapter 7 in their present form remind me of Hegel at his worst. Caudwell's attempt to deduce the nature of the universe from that of the series of numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, ... is perilously like Hegel's deduction of it from " pure thought." In the last chapter, where he shows that the attempt of Eddington and others to equate human freedom with atomic indeterminism rests on a wholly false idea of freedom, he comes into his own again. I know of no writer of our time whose analysis of the problem of freedom goes so deep.

I am certainly going to read this book several times over, and no student of philosophy or of the application of Marxism to science can possibly neglect it. Nevertheless I doubt if it is suitable either for the scientist in search of a philosophy, or for the Marxist who wishes to understand contemporary scientific problems, unless he has first read a good deal of science. On the other hand, Caudwell had something to say about science, and something very important indeed, though he only half said it. I believe that his book will be a quarry of ideas for philosophers for generations to come. And I

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shall be surprised if some at least of his theories are not accepted by physicists. In its final form this might have been one of the most important books of our time, and one cannot read it without realising the immense loss which the world sustained through Caudwell's death, and hoping that any of his other work which survives even in fragmentary form will ultimately be published.

J. B. S. HALDANE.

Democracy

A Handbook of Freedom chosen by Jack Lindsay and Edgell Rickword. (Lawrence and Wishart. 6s.).
Why I am a Democrat: a Symposium edited by Richard Acland, M.P. (Lawrence and Wishart. 2s. 6d.).
Tory M.P. by Simon Haxey. (Gollancz. 7s. 6d.).
The Ship of State by Edward Jenks. (Duckworth. 6s.).
New Tyrannies for Old by Lord Snell and others. (Allen and Unwin. 5s.).

DEMOCRACY, SAYS HARRY POLLITT in his contribution to Richard Acland's symposium, is for the people of Britain something that goes back to their very "origins and root"; the essential element of it, he adds, has always been struggle—the struggle of the common people against oppression and for more freedom, against misery and poverty and for better conditions of life. Anyone who turns the pages of Lindsay and Rickword's first-rate "Record of English Democracy through Twelve Centuries" will have this secular struggle brought vividly before them.

The passages that make up this novel anthology range from serfdom to the Socialist Movement, from Robin Hood ("He was a good outlaw, and did poor men much good") to Chartism. Here is that stout twelfth-century rebel William of the Long Beard; the carpenters of "Milehende" forming their "parliament" to resist an interfering Mayor and Aldermen (1298); the Norfolk peasantry under Robert Kett crying in 1549 "how long should we suffer so great oppression to go unavenged," and rising in arms against the "gorgeous gentlemen"; the manifesto of Captain William Thomson, heading the last stand of the Levellers of our Civil War against Parliament's Grandees—"choosing rather to die for freedom than live as slaves, we are gathered and associated together upon the bare account of Englishmen, with swords in our hands, to redeem ourselves and the land of our nativity from slavery and oppression."

I need hardly say that many of those whose opinions are expressed in the volumes under review have a different approach to democracy from that implied in Pollitt's conception. What is much more significant is the wide agreement that democracy must be active and united if it is to beat back Fascism's onslaught. Mr. R. H. S. Crossman puts this picturesquely in *New Tyrannies* (the latest series of Fabian lectures) when he says that democracy must be "either dynamic or dead. It cannot stay put"; in the Acland symposium this view is echoed by personalities as varied as Mr. Alfred Barnes, Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. J. C. Little of the engineers.

There remain, however, those who bedevil the issue by Philistine twaddlings about Soviet "totalitarianism," equating Fascism and Communism; we get this *tout court* from Lord Snell and rather more cautiously from Professor Jenks (it is absurd to find so respectable an academic authority "equating"

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the Webbs' *Soviet Communism* with the fantastic anti-Soviet farrago of Andrew Smith). This brings us to the venerable dictatorship/democracy confusion, whose persistence can be seen from Mr. Attlee's contribution to *Why I am a Democrat*. The leader of the Labour Party explains that his Party is bound to refuse any form of association with the Communist Party, because it

> cannot join with those who advocate methods which are detrimental to democracy and who envisage as at least a stage in their progress towards a Co-operative Commonwealth a period of forcible dictatorship by a class-conscious minority. The Labour Party realises that to acquiesce in such doctrines would be to betray its democratic faith and to destroy the very thing it seeks to save.

The argument embodied here, and the answers to it, deserve pondering by everyone.

First, it is implied that the Communists are undemocratic. On the contrary, the Communists have always stood, both in word and deed, for the completest democracy possible; hence they assert that the working class, having conquered power, is bound to advance beyond the limitations of bourgeois democracy to " create the conditions and forms of a new and higher democracy, that of the working class " (to quote the first Manifesto of the Communist International in March, 1919). By the same token Communists naturally cling, not less tenaciously because critically, to whatever democracy exists, as a step on the road to more complete democracy. " We will defend every inch of the democratic gains which the working class has wrested in years of struggle," said Dimitrov in 1935, " and we shall resolutely fight to extend those gains." The years since have surely justified those words.

Secondly, it is asserted that the Communist concept of dictatorship is " detrimental to democracy." Yet from its first beginnings Communism has in fact taken the directly contrary view. It was in 1848 that Marx's *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* called for the " immediate introduction of a dictatorship as the only means of achieving democracy." The meaning is clear; how can the working class conquer and maintain power, making democracy safe for the mass of the people, unless it instantly exercises absolute authority to overpower the enemies of the people and of democracy (*i.e.*, acts *dictatorially*) ?

Thirdly, the dictatorship of the working class is described simply as a " forcible dictatorship by a class-conscious minority." How bizarre are these museum pieces of misrepresentation ! This particular one was a favourite with the Russian Mensheviks, who were taken to task on the point by Lenin way back in 1905. Lenin's detailed and lucid exposition was recapitulated by him in 1920. Mr. Attlee or anybody else may read it for themselves in the English Edition of his *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, at pages 241-262. The dictatorship advocated by the Communists, Lenin stressed, was *not* the dictatorship of a minority over the majority (that being what in fact happens under capitalist class rule), but " the dictatorship of the overwhelming majority of the people over a small group of . . . . usurpers of the power of the people." The dictatorship of the working class " rests on the masses of the people. This is the fundamental distinction . . . . It is a power that is open to all, that does everything in sight of the masses . . . . the direct organ of the masses and their will."

Fourthly, Labour Party association with Communists would " destroy the very thing it seeks to save—democracy. To refute this peculiar illusion there are suggestive passages in the Fabian lectures under review. Mr. Wickham Steed, for instance, argues pointedly that one of the reasons for the overwhelming of democracy in Germany was the failure of the Weimar Republic to purge the State apparatus and the armed forces of reactionary

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elements. And Mr. Attlee will scarcely suggest that it was due to the association of German Social-Democracy with the Communists ! Madame Tabouis, again, notes how in France and Britain " certain classes are afraid of democracy and thus undermine the very foundations of democratic society." Is it not obvious that the association, the tacit alliance, of the Labour Party leaders with the Government that represents Madame Tabouis' " certain classes " is really the thing that can destroy democracy ?

In thinking over this last point every reader will do well to give close study to *Tory M.P.* For here, dissected with consummate skill, is the true anatomy of British politics. Here can be seen the domination of Government and Parliament by Big Business, the tie-up of Conservatism and Capital (nearly half the Tory M.P.s are company directors, bagging no less than 775 directorships between them), the prominent representation of armaments and other monopoly interests, the astonishing range of aristocratic affiliation (the charts displaying the cousinhood of Tory M.P.s with Disraeli's " phalanx of great families " must be seen to be believed). Here too is the damning documentation of our " Fifth Column," the pro-Hitler, pro-Mussolini, pro-Franco organisations and their political and business adherents. This book, which is rightly making a sensation, arms democrats with essential knowledge of the enemy and his dispositions.

ALLEN HUTT.

Soviet Statistics

A Critique of Russian Statistics by Colin Clark. (Macmillan. 6s.).

DIRECT COMPARISONS BETWEEN conditions in the Soviet Union and in capitalist countries become from year to year more interesting. Unfortunately, few such comparisons have been made on a scientific basis until very recently. For this reason the welcome which is given to every book published by Mr. Colin Clark will be all the more eager before, but for the same reason our disappointment will be all the greater after, having read his new study on the standard of living and the national income of the Soviet Union as compared with that of Great Britain.

Like many of the younger generation of statisticians Mr. Clark has learned to surmount statistical difficulties which former generations would have used as an excuse for not investigating the subject. But in the present book his pleasure in building bridges goes beyond the caution which must always accompany such feats of statistical virtuosity, and the result is disastrous. And unfortunately he relied on some guides whom he was justified in believing until the trials, but who have since been proved traitors to their cause : I mean the official Soviet population statisticians. The combination of these two faults makes Mr. Clark's book almost valueless.

A perfect example of the ingenuity and at the same time of the foolhardiness of Mr. Clark is the following :

Mr. Clark wants to give a comparison of the development of purchasing power in the Soviet Union and Great Britain for pre-war and post-war years. Since he does not find any figures on retail prices in pre-war years in Russia which he deems comprehensive and reliable enough, Mr. Clark has the ingenious idea of comparing the development of retail prices in Poland, Finland and Estonia for which such data are available. " As these States at that time were within the Russian Customs boundary, and subject to the

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same taxes, the level of prices prevailing in them in 1913 should give some guide to the price level prevailing in Russia." He proceeds to compute an average index of retail prices for the three countries, 1930-31 being 100, calculating back to 1913 with the help of the indices for Poland, Finland and Estonia. An ingenious idea which may be a good one, under two conditions: firstly that the development of prices in the three countries has been about the same; secondly that the general development in the three countries and in the Soviet Union has been the same. But unfortunately even the first of the two conditions is not fulfilled. According to the data given by Mr. Clark prices have changed in the three countries since 1913 as follows:

FOOD.—In	Estonia	..	Decline by 4 per cent.
	In Poland	..	Increase by 10 per cent.
	In Finland	..	Increase by 17 per cent.
FUEL.—In	Estonia	..	Decline by 4 per cent.
	In Poland	..	Increase by 10 per cent.
	In Finland	..	Increase by 83 per cent.
CLOTHING.—In	Estonia	..	?
	In Poland	..	Increase by 10 per cent.
	In Finland	..	Increase by 27 per cent.

To compute a reasonable average increase of prices from these figures is impossible. On the contrary, these figures afford the best proof that while Mr. Clark's method is ingenious, it cannot be applied in this instance because not even in the different provinces of former Russia has there been any uniformity in the development of prices between 1913 and 1930-31.

The second big mistake creeps into Mr. Clark's statistics because of the faultiness of the former Soviet population statistics. All the computations made by Mr. Clark about the development of the food standard, of the national income, etc., per head of the population suffer from a severe downward bias because he reckons with a population increase very much bigger than that which actually has taken place. Actually, the population is only to-day as high as Mr. Clark, on the basis of the former Soviet statistics, assumes it to be at the end of 1933. He reckons that it has increased between the date of the 1926 Census and 1934 by more than it actually has increased between 1926 and to-day.

If he had not taken the sceptical attitude towards the trials in the Soviet Union which he reveals in his book he would have delayed publication a little longer, until the new Census data were out, thus avoiding at least this fault.

JOHN KNIGHT.

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Labour Monthly

Editorial and Publishing Offices:

43 MUSEUM STREET,

New Oxford Street, London, W.C.1

Telephone: HOLBORN 6656

The Editor of The *Labour Monthly* invites contributions. He cannot, however, be held responsible for MSS. sent to him or undertake to enter into correspondence regarding rejected contributions.

The articles in The *Labour Monthly* are indexed in the International Index to Periodicals, New York City, U.S.A., as well as in the annual index in each December issue.

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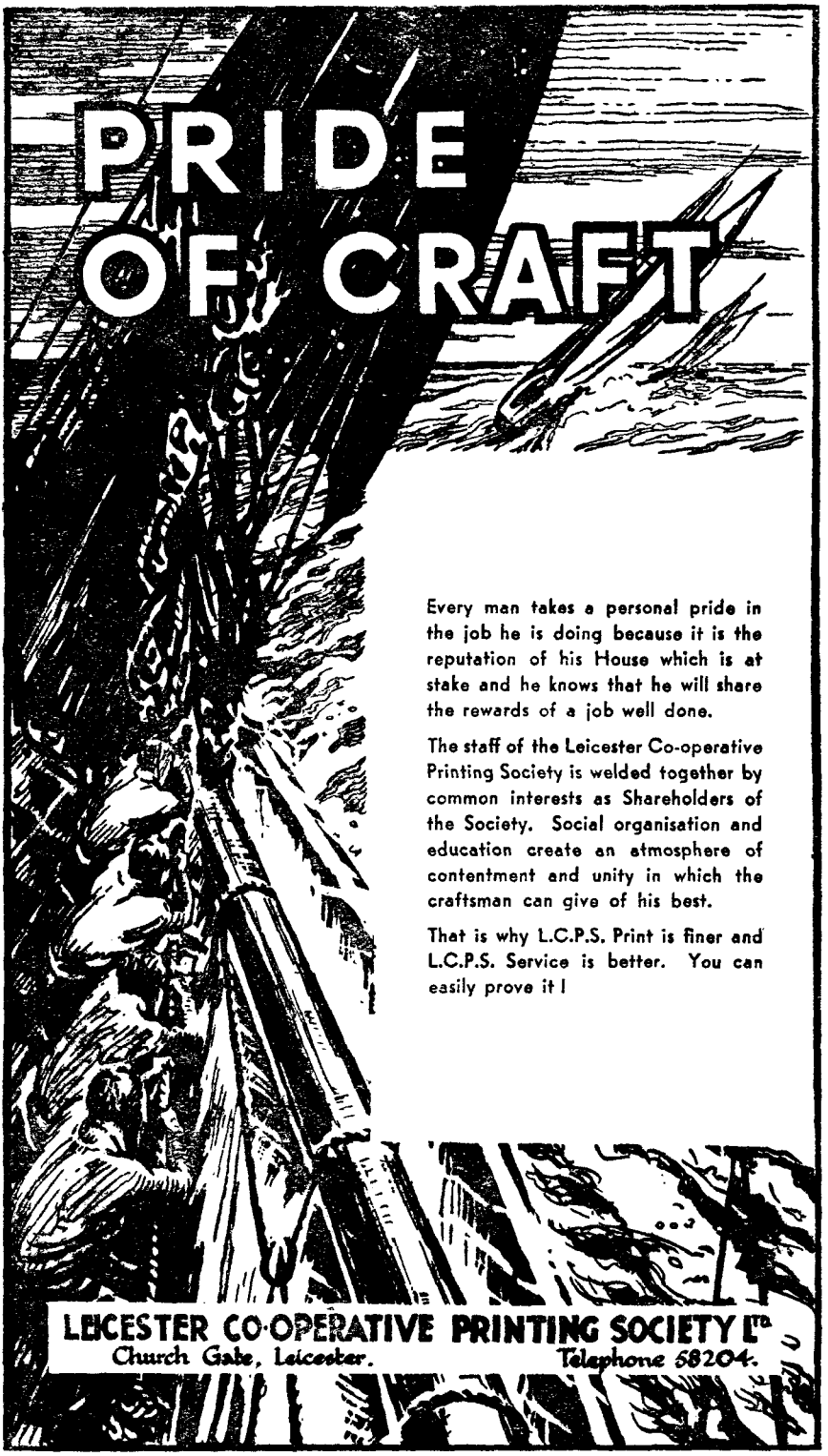
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